A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF THE VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE FLORIDA

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS' AFFIRMATION OF THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

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A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Wake Forest, North Carolina

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In Partial Fulfillment
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Doctor of Education
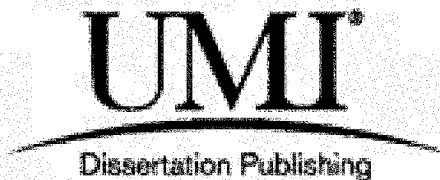
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ABBREVIATIONS

SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
FSB	Florida Southern Baptists
ARG	America's Research Group, Ltd
BIT	Biblical Inerrancy Test
ICBI	International Council on Biblical Inerrancy
BFM 2000	Baptist Faith and Message 2000

ABSTRACT

The culmination of the resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was finalized by adopting the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (BFM 2000). The SBC had discovered in the 1970s and 1980s that belief in the inerrancy of the Bible was not being affirmed by their leadership, particularly within their six seminaries. After a twenty plus year battle, the SBC attempted to affirm in more precise language the inerrancy of the Bible through the BFM 2000. However, this raises the question, how has this firm commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible, as affirmed by the leadership, translated to the general membership of the SBC? The extant literature reveals a gap in the research. That is, the general membership within the SBC had not been surveyed to determine the degree to which they affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Due to the size of the general population of the Southern Baptist Convention and limited resources, a sample population was selected – namely Florida Southern Baptists (FSB). A mixed-method analysis was conducted by surveying 502 FSB church members with a 68-question survey instrument and then formulating an expert panel to comment on the findings. The study revealed that a large percentage of FSB church members affirmed the doctrine, but the underlining beliefs were not always consistently acknowledged. There was an inconsistent understanding of Genesis 1-11 and misapplication of the moral and personal living commands of the Bible. The importance of continual Christian education of the Bible and essential orthodox beliefs within the church and home can ensure that future generations will affirm a correct understanding the term of inerrancy.

Keywords: Inerrancy, Southern Baptists, Scripture, Genesis

To Krista:

The most beautiful, talented, and creative woman I know. I love you!

To Emma, Eliana, and Thomas:

Each one of you is uniquely designed by God. I love each one of you!

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

In 1999, at the annual Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Atlanta, Georgia,

T.C. Pinckney of Virginia made a motion to incoming president Paige Patterson to revisit

the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message (Wooddell, 2007, p. ix). The result was the

formation of the Baptist Faith and Message Committee. There were fourteen committee

members including Richard Land, R. Albert Mohler, Jerry Vines, and Adrian Rogers.

The committee at the annual SBC of 2000 in Orlando, Florida recommended changes that

would reflect more accurately the historic theological position of the Southern Baptist

denomination.

One of the historical positions of Southern Baptists, as stated by Bush and Nettles

in their book *The Baptists and the Bible,* is the prominence of the Bible. They explored

the history of Southern Baptists' belief in the authority, inspiration, and infallibility of the

Bible and concluded that the Bible is and also has been the highest authority for Southern

Baptists (1999, p. 355). When Crawford Toy, professor at Southern Baptist Theological

Seminary in the 19th century, taught that the early chapters of Genesis were historically

inaccurate (1999, p. 211) and Elliot's commentary, published in 1969, questioned the

historical accuracy of Genesis (James, 1986, p. 68), Southern Baptists overwhelmingly

rejected their views and continued to elevate the Scriptures as

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infallible. Through the 1980s and 1990s, the SBC was in the midst of a political struggle over the Bible. Within the denomination were two groups – conservatives and moderates (Williams, 2000, p. 66). Conservatives believed in biblical inerrancy that is the Bible is without error while moderates were strong Bible believers, but allowed more leeway for biblical interpretation. In 1979, led by Paige Patterson and Judge Paul Pressler, the conservatives sought to elect Southern Baptist presidents who would affirm inerrancy of the Bible (James, 1986, p. 69). In order to affect a change throughout the entire SBC, these presidents appointed trustees who had the responsibility of electing seminary trustees. The seminary trustees choose seminary presidents who were conservative and they, in turn, appointed faculty who embraced inerrancy (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 322). The other group was composed of moderates and liberals, who affirmed the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message, but did not believe inerrancy should be a doctrinal affirmation for Southern Baptists (James, 1986, p. 77).

At the annual SBC of 1985, a Peace Committee was formed to see if tensions between both groups could be resolved. The findings of the Peace Committee at the 1987 convention confirmed that there was a division of conservatives and moderates. They discovered that not all leaders within the six seminaries maintained a belief in the direct creation of and historicity of Adam and Eve. Additionally, not all of them affirmed the historicity of the Scriptures, nor did they accept the traditional authorship of the various books, and many denied the authenticity of the miracles mentioned in the Bible (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 385). The SBC had drifted from its roots in the supremacy of the Bible and conservatives wanted to reclaim the historical position. Thus, beginning in 1979, the SBC elected presidents who affirmed inerrancy and eventually new conservative leaders

were appointed to overhaul the six seminaries and leadership with the convention. As a result of the 1987 International Council of Bible Inerrancy's (ICBI) declaration of the inerrancy of Scripture, the SBC "spawned a similar movement among Southern Baptists at Ridgecrest called 'The Conference on Biblical Inerrancy'" (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 36). The inerrancy movement continued within the SBC and, by 1999, a majority of the Southern Baptist messengers were not satisfied with the complete wording of the Baptist Faith and Message 1963. They asked for a blue ribbon panel to review and make recommendations (Garrett, 2009, p. 506). The committee returned the following year at the annual convention in Orlando and their recommendations formed the basis for the changes that created the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (BFM 2000).

Major changes were in the wording of the scripture, triunity of God, omniscience of God, humanity and deity of Jesus, exclusivity of the Gospel, and the role of men and women. Within the area of scripture, the phrase, "*therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy and all Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation*" (Wooddell, 2007, sec. 467) was added and the phrase, "*the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ*" (2007, sec. 467) was removed. A conservative resurgence had taken place and articulated what historic Southern Baptists had collectively affirmed since their inception and what moderate and liberals desired to erode - the supreme authority in the error-free Word of God called the Bible.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project was to understand to what degree Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The SBC has attempted to affirm in more precise language the inerrancy of the Bible through the BFM 2000. However, how has this firm commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible, as affirmed by the leadership,

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translated to the general membership of the SBC? The extant literature reveals a gap in the research. That is, the general membership within the SBC had not been previously surveyed to determine the degree to which, if any, they affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Due to the size of the general population of the Southern Baptist Convention and limited resources a sample population within the Florida Southern Baptist membership was selected – namely the Florida Southern Baptists.

Research Process: Overview of Research Method and Design

In order to accomplish this research, a mixed-method study called *Sequential Explanatory Strategy* was implemented to explore the belief structure of Florida Southern Baptist members' affirmation in the doctrine of inerrancy. *Sequential Explanatory Strategy* "is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data in the first phase of research followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results" (Creswell, 2009, p. 209). Because quantitative research "captures a fleeting moment in time" and at best can extrapolate from conjecture "the state of affairs over a longer timer period" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, p. 184), interjected throughout the survey instrument there was a series of qualitative opened-ended questions to probe in-depth. These open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express the reasons for their current belief in the degree to which they affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy.

The researcher developed an assessment tool called the Biblical Inerrancy Test (BIT) consisting of 68 questions, 22 were open-ended (qualitative) and 46 were Likert-scale (quantitative). The validity and reliability of the BIT was determined by an expert panel comprised of Edward Buchanan, James Porowski, and Travis Bradshaw of

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) and Britt Beemer, president of American's Research Group (ARG). Edward Buchanan, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus in Christian Education at SEBTS and has published his research in Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). James Porowski, Psy.D., is Professor of Child and Family Development at SEBTS and supervises dissertations for the doctor of education program. Travis Bradshaw, Ph.D., is an adjunct Professor of Christian Education at SEBTS, adjunct Professor at the College of General Studies at Liberty University, teaches doctoral level statistics courses, and has conducted over 100 research projects for a host of religious organizations.

Five hundred randomly selected participants representing the Southern Baptist Churches of Florida were selected and the data was gathered by America's Research Group (ARG). Britt Beemer began ARG in 1979 as a research and strategic consulting firm. The list of ARG's clients includes many of the nation's top retailers, leading brands, investors, and entrepreneurial companies. ARG consumer telephone surveys are conducted by a dedicated, well-trained group of researchers with frequent monitoring and quality-assurance procedures. Results are compiled by their staff of market research professionals (Beemer, 2011). ARG has produced statistical research for *Answers in Genesis* for two books: *Already Gone* and *Already Compromised.*

Research Questions

The degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm inerrancy had not been previously researched. To ascertain their degree of affirmation of this essential Christian doctrine, the following questions served as sub-problems that revealed their range of understanding of inerrancy. Thus, this mixed-method study explored the variables that

have influenced the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. The following questions guided the collection and analysis of the data for the current research study:

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$1: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$2: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$3: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$4: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 5$: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 6$: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Delimitations of the Study

The SBC has a membership of over 16,000,000 (Southern Baptist Convention, 2013) and the Florida Baptist Convention has over 1,000,000 (Florida Baptist Convention, 2013). Due to financial considerations, this research focused on the beliefs of the general membership of the Florida Baptist Convention.

1. The study was delimited to the six variables and six hypotheses as it pertains to a belief in inerrancy.

2. This study did not attempt to assess the frequency that pastors had spoken on the topic of inerrancy.

3. This study did not extrapolate the results beyond the church members of Florida Southern Baptist churches.

4. This study was delimited to those participants who answered ARG's randomized phone call and/or had a phone number that was not restricted.

5. This study was delimited to those participants who were able answer the survey in English.

Definitions of Terms

Inerrancy: "When all facts are known, the Scriptures in the their original autographs, and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences" (Feinberg, 1980, p. 294).

Inspiration: "The work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word" (Sproul, 1996, p. 23).

Trinity: "The belief that God is one and that there are three who are God" (Erickson, 2000, p. 17).

Miracles: "An event in which God temporarily makes an exception to the natural order of things, to show that He is acting" (Geivett & Habermas, 1997, p. 62).

Deity of Jesus: "Jesus of Nazareth is truly God and also truly man" (Horton, 2011, p. 474).

Young Earth Creationism: "God created everything during a six-day period of time about six thousand years ago" (Chaffey & Lisle, 2008, p. 9).

Old Earth Creationism: "Earth is some four to five billion years old and the universe some ten to twenty billion" (Nelson, Newman, & Van Till, 1999, p. 105).

Church: "A group of redeemed people that live and serve together in such a way that their lives and communities are transformed" (Chan & Beuving, 2012, p. 52).

Southern Baptist Convention: "The Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia and has grown to over 16,000,000 members. They worship in more than 45,000 churches and sponsor about 5,000 missionaries in the United States, Canada,

and the Caribbean, as well as, sponsor more than 5,000 missionaries in 153 nations in the world" (Southern Baptist Convention, 2013).

Florida Baptist Convention: "The Florida Baptist Convention was organized November 20, 1854 in Madison, Florida and has grown to over 1,009,080 members. They worship in 2,922 churches or church-type missions" (Florida Baptist Convention, 2013).

Research Assumptions

The following assumptions will assist this research study:

1. The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy has formulated a consensus definition of the doctrine of inerrancy.

2. The mixed-methods *Sequential Explanatory Strategy* is a valid method for this topic.

3. The participants voluntarily answered the questions, provided insight and opinions, and did so honestly.

4. Although not every aspect of inerrancy was explored, the researcher believes the results provided valuable and valid information that can be used for the improvement of the proclamation of the doctrine of inerrancy.

5. The belief structure of denominational leadership tends to influence the general membership.

6. Florida Southern Baptists are influenced by the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Rationale and Importance of the Research

Since the year 2000, the leadership of the SBC as expressed in the BFM 2000, has sought to clearly reaffirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Additionally, all six SBC seminaries affirm inerrancy and have been producing pastors for the last 13 years who should be preaching this same truth. Nevertheless, does the average church member affirm this belief and to what degree? To affirm a belief that the Bible is inerrant maybe easy to state, but when examined with more in-depth questions, the results may not be as conclusive. For example, to affirm the doctrine of inerrancy but deny the deity Jesus, would that be cognitive dissonance, denial of inerrancy, or affirmation of inerrancy?

The assumption is that SBC members affirm the doctrine of inerrancy, but to-date limited research has been provided to substantiate the validity of this assumption. For FSB pastors to know if their congregation is affirming inerrancy and to what degree is important. For example, this would allow the pastors to either continue to affirm the doctrine of inerrancy as expressed in the BFM 2000 or to instruct their congregation in this doctrine.

The doctrine of inerrancy is a foundational belief to the SBC. Bush and Nettles concluded, after reviewing the history of the SBC, that the Bible is and has been the highest authority (1999, p. 355). To know if this doctrine continues to be affirmed by the average church member is important for this generation of Southern Baptist leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

AN HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE INERRANCY DEBATE

Introduction

Church history reveals that there has been a battle for the Bible (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 17), and that when heresy has entered the church she has been forced to codify and clarify her doctrine. The battle over inerrancy has continually plagued the church and reared itself up about 130 years ago with controversies in the in the 1880s with Toy and Briggs, in the 1960s with Fuller and Elliot, and most recently in the 1980s with largest American denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention (Nichols & Brandt, 2009). During those debates, there were two sides – there were those who claimed the Bible was error-free and others who asserted that it was not inerrant. The result was the eventual introduction of the theological term *inerrancy* (Sproul, 1996, p. 40) and the formation of the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy in 1978. Inerrancy in its simplest form means "the complete truthfulness of Scripture" (Sproul, 1996, p. 40). The Scriptures are trustworthy because they are the very words of God. Since God is "omniscient, and the Bible is God's Word, then the Bible cannot contain any errors on any topic it addresses" (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 253). From the inerrantists' perspective, this settles the issue of whether the Bible can be trusted. Nonetheless, there have been those who have challenged this belief.

Affirmation of Historical Inerrancy

Geisler and Roach affirm that, since the formation of the Old Testament and New Testament, "total inerrancy has been the standard orthodox view throughout the history of the Christian Church" (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 17). John Hannah, Professor of Church History at Dallas Theological Seminary, in his book *Inerrancy and the Church*, which was written as a compendium for the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI), insists "the position of the church...delineated by scholars, clerics, and teachers, is that of the absolute authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures...is the view of Augustine, Luther, Calvin...and the entire church." (Hannah, 1984, p. ix). A brief overview of last 1800 years will reveal the church's unbending position on the inerrancy of the Bible.

Josephus

In the first century, the Jewish historian, Josephus "held a very high view of Scriptures [Old Testament]... in speaking of Moses, Josephus describes him as a prophet in so exalted a sense that his words are to be regarded as the words of God Himself" (Lindsell, 1976, p. 46). Josephus states:

> Nor is there any disagreement in what is written; they being only prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them of God himself by inspiration; and others have written what hath happened in their own times and that in a very distinct manner also. (Josephus. F. & Whiston, W., 1987)

Early Church

Kelly highlights the importance of the Old Testament for the Apostolic Fathers: "The apologist the doctrinal authority ascribed to [the Old Testament] was based on the apparently unquestioning assumption that, correctly interpreted, it was a Christian book, and that the prophets in particular were really testifying to Christ and His glory" (1978, p. 32).

The writings of Clement (late first and early second century) express "Ye have searched the Scriptures, which are true, which were given through the Holy Ghost" (Lightfoot, 2012). The second century writer Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses* refers to the Scripture no fewer than 1,200 times. "We must believe God, who has given us the right understanding, since the Holy Scriptures are perfect, because they are spoken by the Word of God and the Spirit of God" (Preus, 1980, p. 360). Athanasius, in the fourth century, said "The Holy Scripture is mightier than all synods" (Lindsell, 1976, p. 51). Tertullian, early second century, viewed Scripture as the final authority, "Scripture has absolute authority; whatever it teaches is necessarily true, and woe betide him who accepts doctrines not discoverable in it" (Kelly, 1978, p. 39).

Medieval Church

Lindsell quotes Augustine (fourth century) "The Faith will totter if the authority of the Holy Scriptures loses its hold on men. We must surrender ourselves to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, for it can neither mislead nor be misled" (1976, p. 53). Augustine's regard for the Scriptures was as follows: "If we are perplexed by an apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, the author of this book is mistaken; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have not

understood" (Augustine, n.d.). Thomas Aquinas, a theological titan during this period contended: "It is heretical to say that any falsehood whatsoever is contained either in the gospels or in any canonical Scriptures" (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 18).

Reformation Period

Martin Luther, although his primary focus was not upon the inerrancy of Scriptures, did contend for *sola scripture* as a major plank for the Reformation and affirmed his allegiance stating "the Scriptures, although...written by men, are neither of men for from men but from God" (Van Bemmelen, 1987, p. 20). Luther also indicated, "Scripture is clear and unequivocal on the Scripture itself" (Althaus, 1981, p. 78) and that scripture is "all-clear and all-powerful" (Luther, 2009, p. 161). And when addressing church officials at Worms, Germany (Diet of Worms) he declared "I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the Word of God...Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise" (Bainton, 1990, p. 182).

Calvin spoke of Scripture with unambiguous terms : "free from every stain or defect," "the inerring certainty," "the certain and unerring rule," "unerring light," "infallible Word of God," "the sure and infallible record," "the inerring standard," "the pure Word of God," [and] "the infallible rule of His Holy Truth" (Feinberg, 1980, p. 391). He also declared "that we owe to the Scripture the same reverence that we owe go God, since it has its only source in him and has nothing of human origin mixed with it" (Calvin, 1998, p. 155). For Calvin there was no other higher authority than the Bible. He specified " The Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to consign

his truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority...to have come from heaven" (2008, p. 30).

Nichols and Brant articulate that the Reformation has been summarized by current day reformers as "either Scripture stands over and above us as individual persons and as the corporate people of God, or we, either as individuals or as the collective body of the church, stand over it" (2009, p. 22).

Post Reformation Period

The Westminster Confession of Faith, shaped in the mid-seventeenth century to be a confession of the Church of England, pronounces regarding the Bible: "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (Leith, 1982, p. 195). John Wesley, an eighteenth century preacher who, based upon one estimate, preached over 40,000 sermons and traveled 250,000 miles, described the Bible as "oracles of God" (Placher, 1988, p. 94).

The New Hampshire Confession of 1833, which became the most widely used statement of faith by Baptists (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 346), confessed "We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is the perfect treasure of heavenly instruction...without any mixture of error...true centre [sic]...and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried" (Leith, 1982, p. 335).

For the first 1800 years of church history, the Scriptures were considered inspired, inerrant, and authoritative; the very Word of God. They were also considered the final judge on all matters pertaining to faith and practice and spoke truthfully about that which

it addressed. By the late nineteenth century, though, there was a marked increase in attacks on the veracity of the Scriptures.

American Battle of Inerrancy

Prior to the late nineteenth century, the Bible was affirmed as the inspired, infallible, and the authoritative Word of God. This changed when Charles Briggs, professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York, challenged this belief in the 1880s (Feinberg, 1980, p. 157; Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 219; Lindsell, 1976, p. 188; Nichols & Brandt, 2009, p. 65). Briggs denied inerrancy in the original manuscripts of the Bible because he believed "in accordance with sound logic and scientific methods to form our conception of the original documents from the best documents that we have…in regards to errors in the best texts, is that they were also in the original documents" (Briggs, 2009, p. 68). He added to this his disdain for Dwight Moody "Mr. Moody and his followers are crude in their theology, they pursue false methods in the interpretation of Scriptures, and therefore they spread about not a few serious errors, and on the whole work disorganization and confusion" (2009, p. 3). In response, A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield affirmed the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible (McGowan, 2007, p. 85). Thus, began the inerrancy debates in America and the eventual removal of Briggs from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States (Nichols & Brandt, 2009, p. 66). But the controversy didn't end; rather, it shifted to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Brief History of the Southern Baptists and the Bible

The Baptists have been a people of the Bible. Robert G. Torbet, in his book *A History of the Baptists*, summarizes: "Baptists, to a greater degree than any other group,

have strengthened the protest of evangelical Protestantism against traditionalism. This they have done by their constant witness to the supremacy of the Scriptures" (1963, p. 483). Since the sixteenth century under the influence of Balthasar Hubmair, Baptists have confirmed the supremacy of the Scriptures. Affirmations of the Scriptures through the *London Confession* of 1644, *Declaration of Faith* of 1742 and *New Hampshire Confession* of 1830 have all revealed the importance the Bible has had for Baptists.

The Southern Baptist Convention began in 1845 (James, 1986, p. 42), but not until 1925 was there a comprehensive confession of faith (Garrett, 2009, p. 435). The reason for such an absence was not that the newly formed convention did not affirm the supremacy of the Bible; rather, it was because of the Baptists' aversion to creeds. Their "creed" was "nothing but the Bible" (Garrett, 2009, p. 434). A challenge within the SBC did arise in 1876 when Crawford H. Toy, professor at Southern Baptist Seminary, announced that the Bible was simply historically wrong about the Genesis 1-11. He denied the creation account of Genesis and Noah's global flood, and he believed that "Abraham received his monotheism from some existing human source in Chaldea" (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 211) rather than from divine revelation. Toy eventually resigned and the board accepted his resignation. "The next day...several other Baptist state papers carried the announcement ...[with] expressed deep regret at the loss of Toy, but went on to affirm that is was manifestly right for him to submit his resignation and that it was right for the trustees to accept it" (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 217).

Toy's beliefs had compromised the long standing position of the SBC regarding the Bible and even though there was no official declaration, all involved knew he had denied a tenant of the SBC. Due to "prevalence of naturalism, the continuing agitation

over the question of evolution and the fundamentalists-modernist controversy" (Garrett, 2009, p. 442), the Baptist Faith and Message 1925 was formed and the following regarding the Bible was affirmed:

> We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried. (Southern Baptist Convention, 2013)

In 1961, the Fundamentalists and modernist controversy surfaced again, this time within the SBC. It swirled around the publication of Ralph Elliot's commentary of Genesis (R. Williams, 2000, p. 21). Broadman Press had published Elliot's commentary, *The Message of Genesis*, in which he denied the unique creation of Adam and Eve, affirmed Noah's flood was local, and the patriarchs were not literal persons (R. Williams, 2000, p. 22). "To make matters worse, Elliot's employer, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary during this controversy, reaffirmed him a consecrated Christian, a promising scholar, and teacher, a loyal servant of the Southern Baptists" (2000, p. 23). As a result, the Baptist Faith and Message 1963 was adopted with a reaffirmation of the inerrancy of Scripture and additional changes designed to "establish doctrinal parameters for all Southern Baptist institutions" (2000, p. 24). The implication was that Elliot's commentary was unacceptable language to describe the belief that the Holy Bible was

written by men, divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of divine instruction without any mixture of error.

The controversy did not end in 1963; rather, it escalated in 1969 when Broadman Press published the Broadman Commentary and choose G. Henton Davies to comment on Genesis. His beliefs were no different than Elliot's regarding the historical accuracy of Genesis (2000, p. 25). This revealed that the leadership within the SBC held different views of the inspiration of the Bible than the intended understanding of the Baptist Faith and Message of 1925 and 1963. "For the first time in several decades Southern Baptists faced a theological crisis" (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 328). A resurgence of the supremacy of the Bible was needed. Two conservative men, who believed in the inerrancy of the Bible, Paige Patterson and Houston judge Paul Pressler, had an idea on how to reverse the liberalism that had penetrated the SBC leadership.

Influence of International Council of Biblical Inerrancy

During the same time of the SBC resurgence, the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy was birthed in 1977 with the expressed intent to "support the historical view on inerrancy" (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 22). A group of men lead by R.C. Sproul drafted an article expressing a theological understanding of the term inerrancy (Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 25). One year later a group of 240 signatories (out of 268) representing various streams of evangelicalism produced the well-known document: The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. The Chicago Statement of 1978 expressed a short declaration on inerrancy that the autographic text of the Scripture is the inspired and the inerrant Word of God (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 332). Included with the short statement were nineteen articles affirming the definition of inerrancy, and an official commentary (Sproul, 1996).

Three prominent SBC leaders signed the statement – Rush Bush, W.A. Criswell, and Paige Patterson. The influence of the Chicago Statement on the SBC was so significant that one of the signees - Rush Bush proposed that the SBC adopt the statement as its model. His proposal eventually led to the formation of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention

Turbulent times over the Elliot commentary in 1961 and the publication of the Broadman Commentary in 1969 coupled with "double speak" – adroit speech in which seminary professors spoke in such a way that simple layman heard a straight forward interpretation of the Bible while at the same time the professor would affirm modern biblical criticism of the Bible that only sophisticated hearers could understand – caused consternation for the conservatives within the SBC. "The Southern Baptist seminary classroom of that day had little sympathy with the traditional beliefs of most Baptists in the churches in the present or with the theology of Baptist theologians in the past" (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 335). To reverse this trend, conservatives, led by Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler, came up with a plan whereby they would win back the seminaries and denominations. The plan was to recruit delegates who would elect presidents for the SBC who affirmed inerrancy. In turn, the presidents would appoint persons to crucial positions within the denomination, who, in turn, would appoint board members to the seminaries. The board members would elect seminary presidents who affirmed inerrancy, then these presidents would hire deans and faculty who affirm the doctrine of inerrancy (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 332; Garrett, 2009, p. 494; Geisler & Roach, 2011, p. 35; R. Williams, 2000, p. 51). In short, a conservative resurgence of the fundamental

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belief in the inerrancy of the Bible would be restored to the SBC if Patterson and Pressler had their way.

The plan was successful and, in 1979, Adrian Rodgers was elected president with 55% of the vote (R. Williams, 2000, p. 58). This process continued through 1985 with successive election of SBC presidents who affirmed inerrancy of the Bible, yet this created controversy within the convention and peace needed to be made between conservatives and moderates/liberals. In 1985, a Peace Committee was formed to "determine the sources of the controversy and make findings and recommendations...so that Southern Baptists might affect reconciliation" (Bush & Nettles, 1999, p. 496). The Peace Committee made its final report in 1987 at the SBC in St. Louis and found that a liberal drift had entered the convention. They found evidenced of a mixture of beliefs. Some of the faculty of the six seminaries affirmed and also denied the historicity of Adam, historicity of every event in the Bible, the authorship of every book of the Bible, and miracle claims of the Bible (Report of the SBC Peace Committee, 1987). Two recommendations were made: (1) "acceptance that the seminaries were the root of the problem in the convention" and (2) "any solution to the controversy must be rooted in a plan to change the seminaries" (R. Williams, 2000, pp. 138–139).

Prior to St. Louis, the Peace Committee met at the Glorieta Baptist Church in Santa Fe, New Mexico (1986) where the six seminary presidents vowed to affirm the full inspiration of Bible. The declaration was known as the Glorieta Statement which affirmed "Christianity is supernatural in its origin and history," "miracles of the Old and New Testament are historical," and "the sixty-six books of the Bible are not errant in any area of reality" (Report of the SBC Peace Committee, 1987). This was considered a

victory for the conservative resurgence and ensured continuation of SBC presidents who would affirm the inerrancy of the Bible.

The inerrancy movement continued within the SBC, and, in 1999, a majority of the Southern Baptist messengers, who were not satisfied with the complete wording of the Baptist Faith and Message 1963, asked for a blue ribbon panel to review and make recommendations (Garrett, 2009, p. 506). T.C. Pinckney of Virginia made a motion to incoming president, Paige Patterson, to revisit the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message (Wooddell, 2007). The result was the formation of the Baptist Faith and Message Committee. There were fourteen committee members including Richard Land, R. Albert Mohler, Jerry Vines and Adrian Rogers. The committee returned the following year at the annual convention in Orlando and their recommendations formed the changes that created the BFM 2000.

Major changes were made in sections with the wording of the Scripture, the triunity of God, the omniscience of God, the humanity and deity of Jesus, the exclusivity of the Gospel, and the roles of men and women. Within the area of Scripture, the phrases "therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy" (Wooddell, 2007, sec. 467) and "all Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation" (2007, sec. 467) were added and the phrase "the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ" (2007, sec. 467) was removed. The conservatives had won and had articulated what the SBC had collectively affirmed since their inception and what moderate and liberals had desired to erode - the supreme authority in the error-free Word of God called the Bible. The SBC had returned to its historical roots.

Towards an Evangelical Understanding of Inerrancy

Since the ICBI and BFM 2000, the evangelical community has been focused on the doctrine of inerrancy. Topics such as revelation, Jesus' affirmation of inerrancy, inspiration, infallibility, authority of Scripture, and hermeneutics have contributed to a more complete comprehension of the theological concept of inerrancy. Thus, a sampling of the evangelical community's commentary on inerrancy will be produced first followed by the theological affirmations of inerrancy of key Southern Baptist theologians.

Revelation of God to Humanity

God is the Creator and humanity is His creation. Genesis chapter one reveals that before any created being existed, God existed. There must be a first cause to all that exists or else the past can never reach the present (Sproul, 2009, p. 51) and there must be a designer as evidenced by design (Craig, 2008, p. 103). Yet the Scriptures do not make such philosophical claims (nor deny them); rather, they presume that God is known universally (G. L. Bahnsen & Booth, 1996, p. 38) and He can be experienced (Boa & Bowman, Jr., 2006, p. 367). This was true for our first parents – Adam and Eve. They lived in harmony with God and experienced daily communion with God (Morris, 1976, p. 116). This relationship changed dramatically when Adam and Eve disobeyed the instructions of God and decided that they knew better than their Creator. This disobedient act created a rift between the Creator and His creation. Williams expresses the process as universal: "at rock bottom our sinful nature is the result of an inexplicable turn away from God" (2002, p. 48). The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans (1:18-20), states this rift:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

All of humanity, though separated from God, still knows that He exists but sadly seeks to suppress this knowledge. Boice describes this knowledge as "awareness of God [as] merely the sense that there is a God and that he deserves to be obeyed and worshipped" (Boice, 1986, p. 29). Theologians have described this knowledge of God as the general revelation of God. If God does not reveal Himself in some form, then individuals cannot know Him. Therefore, God must have revealed Himself because all of humanity knows that He exists.

God has revealed Himself in two ways – general revelation and special revelation (Lightner, 1995, p. 11). First, general revelation - Allison and Anthony state that God's general revelation is revealed to all of humanity (1) through nature – Psalms 19:1 "The heavens are telling of the glory of God", (2) his providential care – Acts 14:17 "and yet [God] did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" and (3) a sense of right and wrong - Romans 2:14 "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves" (Estep, Anthony, & Allison, 2008, pp. 75–76). This type of revelation is not sufficient to bring a person to the realization that Jesus is the Christ and full forgiveness of sins is found solely in Him. On the contrary, this revelation from God, although perfect in

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transmission, is corrupted in the minds of humanity. There is a common grace in this revelation that "restrains sin and animates civic virtues arts, so that culture may fulfill its own important but limited, temporal, and secular ends" (Horton, 2011, p. 143). Horton adds that because humanity suppresses the clear general revelation of God, that more of the same revelation is not needed; rather, a different *kind* of revelation which has the ability to make alive spiritually dead people (2011, p. 142).

The second kind of revelation is special revelation. While general revelation is divinely communicated to all of humanity, special revelation is only communicated to a particular people (Estep et al., 2008, p. 73). Ryrie lists ten avenues by which God reveals Himself through special revelation: (1) the lot – Proverbs 16:33, (2) the Urim and Thummim – Exodus 28:30, (3) dreams – Genesis 20:3, (4) visions – Isaiah 1:1, (5) Theophanies – Exodus 3:2, (6) angels – Luke 2:10, (7) the prophets – Zechariah 1:1, (8) events in history – Ezekiel 25:7, (9) Jesus Christ – John 1:14, and (10) the Bible – John 17:17 (1986, pp. 63–64). Of the ten listed, the Bible is the location whereby the other nine are known. The Triune God is fully capable of revealing Himself presently and does through the work of the Holy Spirit, but the experience will align with the written record of God's words. Ryrie suggests that two approaches are used to determine the credibility of scriptural revelation: (1) Fideist approach – the Bible is self-authenticating through the revelational experience that all believers encounter or (2) Empiricist approach – the Bible stresses the intrinsic credibility by evidence of factual and historical credentials. He argues that both approaches are valid and should be used to defend the Scriptures (1986, p. 65).

Both general and special revelation originates from God. Boice maintains that if God were only to reveal Himself through general revelation, humanity would be hopelessly lost. For God is incapable of communicating incompletely (1986, p. 28), thus, the problem with general revelation is not God, but humanity's incapacity to correctly conclude that God is essential for life. Consequently, God can only be known "by coming down to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Horton, 2011, p. 147) and then leaving us a perfect record "that delivers the authoritative teaching that we are to proclaim to the end of the earth" (2011, p. 151). That perfect record is the Bible and the Bible affirms by its own testimony to be the very words of God without any error.

Exegetical Evidence of Scripture for Inerrancy

If the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, then there would seem to be a way to determine if it such. Two routes seem to be possible. The first route is that evidence could be found outside of the text, such as separate records that assert the Bible is error free, but then those outside sources would be the final authority, in effect replacing the Bible as the foundational authority. Reason would then be sovereign, superseding the Bible and making human rationale the final arbitrator. The second route is to presume that the Bible is what it claims to be and search for internal evidence. This route makes the Bible the final arbitrator and human reason subservient to it. Lisle states, "we can either begin with God and His presuppositions (as revealed in His word), or we can reject them and be reduced to foolishness" (2009, p. 146). Proverbs 1:7 establishes this point by proclaiming "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."

The Old Testament cites the phrase "thus says the LORD" 430 times, and the New Testament uses the phrase "it is written" 70 times, which is short hand for quoting the authority of the Old Testament (BibleWorks, 1998), but those statistics do not affirm that *all* of Scripture originates from God. The two central passages that affirm that the Bible originates from God are II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:20-21.

In II Timothy 3:16 where Paul reminds Timothy: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." Two important facets should be highlighted from this passage. The first is the translation of the word *all* and second is the meaning of the word *inspired*. Wallace stresses that the translation of πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος should be "all Scripture is inspired" rather than "every inspired Scripture" based upon context and grammar. Contextually, because 4:1-2 would not coincide with Paul's command to Timothy to preach the word because verse 16 is asyndetic (i.e., begins without a conjunction), thus *Scripture* (γραφὴ) is a continuation of the author's discussion of the *holy writings* (γράμματα) in verse 15 (1996, p. 313). The second facet is the translation of θεόπνευστος. Feinberg comments "In my judgment, the importance of this word to any discussion of Scripture is decisive. This particular word is a compound of *theos* ("god") and *pneo* ("breathe")…[and] has nothing to do with *in-spring*…[rather] the Scriptures are the spirated breath of God. For this reason, Paul can say that the Scriptures are God's speech" (1980, p. 278). Swindoll remarks "all Scripture is inspired because it has been miraculously 'God breathed'(1995, p. 62). The image here is of visualizing the very breath of God in the process of producing the Bible. Harkening back to Genesis, when God breathed into man and gave him life, in a similar yet different manner, God does not breathe *into* Scripture; rather,

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this divine breathing through the human authors *produces* Scripture (Douglas, Tenney, & Silva, 2011, p. 651). Inscripturation is the concept advocated "for the sake of preserving the apostolic testimony and extending the fellowship of the church around the 'word of life', the proclamation and teaching of the apostles has been reduced to written form" (G. Bahnsen, 1980, p. 154).

The second is II Peter 1:20-21, where Peter addresses unnamed believers and declares, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The focus of this passage is dual authorship. All Scriptures – Old and New Testament – found their origin *in God through* the medium of *men*. Lightner phrases it this way: "God's Word has come to us through humans. The Bible was not written by God and handed directly to man as a finished product. It came from God, to be sure, but employed finite humans to write down his message and to recognize it as his Word" (1995, p. 13). Although the authors of each individual book were the vehicles by which God produced His written word, they were not "passive in the process of inspiration" nor "inspired in their persons" so that every word or phrase they spoke in their lifetime was on par with Scripture (Horton, 2011, p. 160). (See *Inspiration of the Scripture* for further clarification of the process of inspiration). On the contrary, the prophets and apostles wrote what God wished. His words were inscripturated in such a way that no possible form of corruption could have contaminated the process.

Based upon these two central verses and the character of God, one can deduce that the Scriptures should be error-free. But do the Scriptures declare they are error free?

Some of the strongest indications, as Sproul points out, are in John 17:17: "Your word is truth" and John 10:35, "Scripture cannot be broken." These verses are two indications that the Bible came to us from the ultimate source – God (Sproul, 1992, p. 15). Swindoll adds that in John 17:17 "in four monosyllabic words we find the basis of our belief in the veracity, the reliability of Scripture" (1995, p. 58). Ryrie augments, "indeed the Bible seems to be claim inerrancy for itself" based upon the "Lord's claim for the abiding character of the letters which spell the words of Scripture" (1989, p. 41). The passage that he alludes to is Matthew 5:18, "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." Here Jesus affirms the importance of the Law as expressed in the Old Testament and that not even the smallest stroke of the Hebrew letters would be unfulfilled.

In Hebrew the smallest letter is the yodh ('), which takes about as much space as an apostrophe and the stroke of a pen most likely means the "little lines or projections that differentiate certain Hebrew letters which in other respects are similar" (Lightner, 1995, p.30). To alter the smallest letter or the stroke of the pen could change the definition of a word. God was so involved in the process that He ensured that the words were spelled with appropriate strokes to formulate the exact words He desired so that they would be fulfilled according to His plan.

Both I Samuel 15:29 and Titus 1:2 affirm that God cannot lie. The character of God is such that He only speaks truth, thus the Bible must speak full truth. "If it were not so, then how could the Lord affirm that man lives by *every* word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4), especially if all Scripture is breathed out of God (2 Tim.

3:16)" (Ryrie, 1986, p. 83). However, the authors did quote untruthful statements accurately, such as Job's friends (Horton, 2011, p. 161) or Satan's lie in the Garden. These events were carefully preserved with the exact words that God desired, while at the same not doing damage to the will of the human authors. The Bible presents strong evidence that it is the error free Word of God that can be trusted down to the very stroke of the pen.

Theological Affirmation of Inerrancy

While the word "theology" is a combination of *theos* which means God and *logos* which means rational expression (Ryrie, 1986, p. 13), systematic theology seeks to "correlate the data of biblical revelation as a whole in order to exhibit systematically the total picture of God's self-revelation" (1986, p. 12) of a particular topic. Theologians seek to understand what the Bible says, and when they write, their words are crafted out of their cultural milieu and are approximations of what God said in His word. They seek to be as identical as possible with the Scriptures, but inherently must produce a work that is distinguishable. Chafer expresses systematic theology as "a science which follows a humanly devised scheme or order of doctrinal development and which purports to incorporate into its system all the truth about God and His universe from any and every source" (Chafer, 1993, p. 5). Accordingly, when viewing the theological matter of inerrancy, one must keep in mind that the reader has moved from the very words of God (as translated from Hebrew and Greek to one's native tongue) to an interpretation by fallible theologians who are attempting to express as accurately as possible the authorial meaning of the text. As Meadors states "God has provided a special, inspired text for our benefit, but he has not provided inspired commentaries" (2009, p. 8).

Inerrancy is a theological word that is not found in the Bible (Sproul, 1996, p. 40), but that does not mean it is not a biblical idea expressed in Scriptures. The word Trinity, which means that God is one in essence and three in persons, is not found in the Bible either; nevertheless, the church has concluded there is sufficient scriptural support (i.e., Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 1:10-11, and Matthew 28:19) to affirm the doctrine (McGrath, 2013, p. 32). In a similar manner, the ICBI concluded that inerrancy "is an appropriate theological term to refer to the complete truthfulness of Scripture" (Sproul, 1996, p. 40).

Ryrie has expressed inerrancy as "simply that the Bible tells the truth" (1986, p. 82). Eddy and Boyd expand the idea to say the Bible is "without error in all matters it addresses, including history and even science" (2009, p. 17). Lightner addresses inerrancy at the foundation by simply stating " the original documents were without error [and] to believe the Bible is inerrant is to believe that it does not lie in anything it affirms" (1995, p. 12). Horton views inerrancy through a first class condition which assumes the truth for the sake of the argument (Wallace, 1996, p. 450) "if God has in fact done so [reported through Scripture the historical facts of creation and redemption] then the Spirit's utterance cannot include error (2011, p. 173). However, the definition that has seemed to capture the attention of the evangelical theological community is that which was produced by Paul Feinberg. He delineated inerrancy as that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in the their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences (1980, p. 294). Feinberg reinforces the doctrine of the inerrancy, that the Bible is error free, through scriptural support of Psalm119. Here the author affirms three times "your law is truth"

(v. 142), "your commandments are truth" (v. 151), and "your word is truth" (v. 160). This concept of truth is appropriately expressed with the English word inerrancy. "Such a definition has the advantage of defining a negative in terms of a positive concept. Conversely, it means that the Bible is never false" (1980, p. 294). Boice makes his defense of inerrancy through a six-step inductive process:

1. The Bible is a generally trustworthy document.

2. On the basis of the history recorded by the Bible, we have sufficient reason for believing that the central character of the Bible, Jesus Christ, did what he claimed to have done and therefore is who he claimed to be: the unique Son of God.

3. As the unique Son of God, Jesus is an infallible authority.

4. Jesus taught the Bible was the error free Word of God (Matthew 5:18).

5. If the Bible is the Word of God, as Jesus taught, it must for this reason alone be entirely trustworthy and inerrant, for God is a God of truth.

6. Therefore, based upon the teaching of Jesus, the church believes the Bible also to be infallible [inerrant]. (1986, p. 73)

Jesus and the Doctrine of Inerrancy

Jesus affirmed the inerrancy of the Bible by acceptance of historical accounts, use of Scripture, quotation of Scripture and equating His words with the words of the Father. He accepted as true the account of Jonah and the large fish (Matthew 12:40), the historicity of Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4), Isaiah (Matthew 12:17), Elijah (Matthew 17:11-12), Daniel (Matthew 24:15), Abel (Matthew 23:35), Zechariah (Matthew 23:35), David (Matthew 22:45) as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 8:11; John 8:39). Ryrie states, "Christ did not merely allude to these stories, but He authenticated the

events in them as factual history to be completely trusted" (1986, p. 87). As the prophet

predicted in Deuteronomy (18:18; cf. John 8:40), Jesus could not pronounce fictitious

stories as true events. He was bound as a prophet to speak the truth (Deuteronomy 18:18-

20). Evidence that Jesus was *the* true prophet was affirmed when He fulfilled his own

prediction that He would die and three days later he would rise again (John 2:19,

Matthew 28:6). His words could be trusted and His word was that the Scriptures were

inerrant.

Jesus' use of Scripture is replete throughout His ministry. He affirms that each

"stroke of the pen" or "smallest letter" would be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18-20) and that

"Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). "He saw his life as a fulfillment of Scripture"

(Boice, 1986, p. 44) when He entered the temple and read from Isaiah 61:1-2a (Luke

4:18-19) declaring,

> "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to
>
> bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To
>
> proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; o proclaim the favorable
>
> year of the LORD" and then stopped midsentence and did not read the rest: "And
>
> the day of vengeance of our God."

"The implication was clear, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah who could bring the

Kingdom of God which had been promised for so long – but His First Advent was not

His time for judgment" (Blum, 1983, p. 214). When John the Baptist was thrown into

prison (Matthew 11), he began to doubt if Jesus was the Promised One that he had

prepared the way for (Matthew 3). John expected to see the kingdom of God at work,

which would produce freedom, thus he sent his disciples for reassurance. Jesus did not

respond directly to the question; rather, He told John's disciples: Go back and report to John what they heard and saw taking place. "Among notable events occurring were the blind being given sight, lame people walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being given life, and the good news being preached to the poor" (Blum, 1983, p. 43). In so many words, Jesus said "Don't take my word for who I am [instead] look at what Isaiah foretold about the Messiah, then see if I'm fulfilling it. Jesus challenged people to evaluate his ministry in the light of God's Word" (Boice, 1986, p. 44).

In the temptation account as expressed in Matthew and Luke, "Jesus successfully resisted this temptation, using Scripture to battle Satan (Harbin, 2005, p. 387). He replied that man lives by *every word* that proceeds from the mouth of God. Jesus did not say "some words" but "every word" (Ryrie, 1986, p. 86). Jesus countered each temptation that Satan presented with the phrase "it is written" and then quoted Scripture. His form of resistance was reciting Scripture that He believed was from God. Horton argues that Jesus regarded these quotations as His Father's own words (2011, p. 155). The implication of this assertion was the unity that He and the Father had through His knowledge of the scriptures. To quote scripture was to quote his Father who had the power to defeat Satan.

Jesus claimed to be equal with God. John records the words of Jesus when He announces, "I and the Father are One" (10:30). The Jews were so irate that Jesus had made Himself equal with God that they gathered stones to so that they might stone Him to death. Jesus quotes one of the Psalms (82:6), and shows that God called the rebellious forefathers of the Jews "gods;" thus He, as the true Son of God, had the scriptural right to call Himself this name. God was not calling the forefathers of the Jews divine; rather, he

was calling them judges. "Jesus added to his argument the words 'and Scripture cannot be broken'" (Blum, 1983, p. 312). Jesus sought to avoid any misunderstanding that there was an error in the Scriptures. What He spoke was true and the Scriptures which were error-free confirmed His right to call Himself the Son of God.

The Inspiration of the Scripture

The Scripture claims to originate from God. Thus, Scripture is claiming to be ultimate standard by which no other standard can evaluate it. "There are always some things that must be accepted without proof" (Nash, 1999, p. 196) or else *that* something else must be the ultimate standard. Since the Bible is both from God and also a human product, in what manner did both authors work towards the completion of each book? Paul reminds Timothy (II Timothy 3:16) that all Scripture is inspired by God. Inspired is a translation from the Greek word θεόπνευστος which means "God-breathed" (Sproul, 1992, p. 15). God breathed out his words to produce the Bible. At the same time, Peter informs his audience in his second letter (II Peter 1:20-21) that no part of Scripture came about by the will of the human authors; rather, they were carried by the Holy Spirit to produce the words that God desired. So in what manner did this come about?

Lightner describes the main theories of inspiration (1995, pp. 14–15). The first theory is the *natural inspiration view*, which proposes that the authors of each book were geniuses and no supernaturalism was involved. This view argues that the authors were like exceptional artists, musicians, and poets who produced masterpieces unaided by any divine guidance (Chafer, 1993, p. 70). The second theory is the *mystical inspiration view*, which suggests the authors had a higher degree of inspiration than normal humans, but that what they wrote was not necessarily the word of God. This view can also lead to

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the belief that God could at any time inspire one to write additional "Scripture," which would undermine the authority of the Bible (Chafer, 1993, p. 70). The third theory is the *partial inspiration view*, which holds that certain parts of the Scripture were inspired and others were not. The parts that are inspired are salvific in nature while the historical parts may not be. Ryrie rightly states " you cannot separate history and doctrine and allow for errors (however few) in the historical records and at the same time be certain that the doctrinal parts are true" (1986, p. 74). The difficulty of this view is that human reason, rather than Scripture, becomes the ultimate standard. The fourth theory is the *dictation (mechanical) inspiration view*, which maintains that the writers of Scripture were simply secretaries who wrote what they were told by God without any human input. Although there is evidence that God did transcribe part of His Word (i.e., the creation events, the Ten Commandments), the literary styles of the Pentateuch, the book of Job, and the book of Daniel are significantly different, indicating that human personality was allowed to be expressed (Chafer, 1993, p. 68). The fifth theory - not mentioned by Lightner - is the *Barthian inspiration view*, which claims that "the Bible becomes God's Word when the Word of God, Christ, speaks to us through its pages" (Ryrie, 1986, p. 75). The Bible is not the Word of God; however, it can *become* the Word of God when the believer experiences Christ. No other book can become the Word of God, only the Bible, but the Bible is not inerrant. Thus any portrait of Christ that the Bible paints is subject to errors. In effect, one never knows for sure if Christ is accurately portrayed in the Bible, nor does one ever know if his faith is placed in the correct doctrine. The final theory is the *verbal and plenary inspiration view*, which reasons, "the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used [and] human authorship was respected to the extent that the

writers' characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error"(Chafer, 1993, p. 71). This is the view that seems to capture more accurately the understanding of II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:20-21.

Horton adds to the doctrine of inspiration the work of the Trinity. "The Father speaks in the Son and by the perfecting agency of the Spirit" (2011, p. 156). All three persons of the Godhead were at work in the formation of the Scriptures. The Gospel of John informs that the second person of the Trinity became flesh (1:14) and His words are preserved for us (21:31). The third person of the Trinity recalls the second person's words for the disciples (14:26) and the Father sends the third person of the Trinity. Inspiration is a full work of the Trinity.

The Canonical Text

Knowing that the Bible is the breathed-out words of God through human authorship, what assurances are there that the proper books are included into the mix of the sixty-six? Lee Strobel, in his book *The Case for Christ*, sought the same reassurances "when I first found out that there are no surviving originals of the New Testament, I was really skeptical" (1998, pp. 58–59). His solution to the dilemma was to seek out Bruce Metzger (1914-2007), New Testament scholar in the area of textual witnesses. Metzger articulates that there are approximately 5,664 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (Strobel, 1998, p. 63). When compared with the second greatest amount of manuscript evidence for ancient writing – Homer's *Iliad* – the difference is significant. Homer's *Iliad,* which was written about 800 B.C., has about 650 copies, and most of them are from the second and third century A.D. (Strobel, 1998, p. 60). The gap between the original composition of the *Iliad* and the earliest known copy is roughly 1,000 years. In

comparison, the gap between the original composition of the New Testament and its earliest copy is 30 years (Metzger, 1992, pp. 38–39). In addition, there are dozens of papyri manuscripts - many dated within the 200 years of the originals (1992, pp. 36–42); 300 uncial manuscripts (those written in capital letters); 3000 miniscules (those not written in capital letters); 2,000 lectionaries (church reading books); and about 8,000 manuscripts of ancient versions (i.e., Coptic, Latin) (Carson & Moo, 2005, p. 26). Metzger augments the significance of the writings of the church fathers by saying, "so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament" (1992, p. 86).

The canonization of the Old Testament was fully accepted by the second century B.C. and evidenced by Jesus' quotation of the threefold division (Lightner, 1995, pp. 17–18). There were five tests that were usually applied to determine whether a book should be included or not. First, were the books revered and received? Second, was the book written, edited, or endorsed by a prophet or spokesman from God? Third, could the book be traced back to the time and writer it professed to originate? Fourth, was the book a record of actual facts? Fifth, how was the book received by the nation of Israel? (1995, pp. 18–19).

Regarding the canonization of the New Testament, Gundry advocates that when Marcion, a second century heretic, omitted certain books (i.e., Matthew, Mark, John, General Epistles) from a collection of recognized authors, the church's reaction showed that the process of canonizing the twenty-seven books had already begun (2012, pp. 102–103). "By the end of the second century it is clear from all the evidence available that

our four gospels were accepted, not only as authentic, but also as Scripture on a level with the Old Testament" (Guthrie, 1990, p. 24). Towards the end of the fourth century, two events settled the canonization of the New Testament. The first was a letter from Athanasius of Alexandria (367) which circulated declaring the twenty-seven books as canon, and the second was the Council of Carthage (397) where the issue was settled for good (Curtis, Lang, & Petersen, 1991, pp. 37–38).

Lightner gives four reasons why the canon is closed and that no new Scripture will be written. The first reason is scriptural. Jude 3 and Revelation 22:18-19 indicate the canon is closed and add in a warning to whoever attempts to add to the Bible. The second reason is theological. If God desired to add more Scripture, He would ensure this new revelation would be preserved, collected, and recognized by the church. The third reason is historical. The church took great care to discover the twenty-seven books, and they also took great care to ensure that no serious challenge would be made to reverse this decision. The fourth reason is apostolic. There are no longer any prophetic or apostolic spokesmen for God (1995, pp. 22–23).

Hermeneutics and the Scripture

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy affirms that the Scriptures should be:

> Interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. [They] deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship. (Sproul, 1996, p. 52)

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The Bible is understood based upon grammar, word order, and historical context as defined by the literary context, canonical theology, and most important, the author's intended meaning. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., has influenced evangelical hermeneutics and states that meaning "is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent" (1967, p. 8). Arp conveys that authorial intent is understood "by studying the text in which he (author) expressed that meaning" (2000, p. 36). The author of each book of the Bible meant to communicate a particular meaning with his choice of words (Archer, 2007, p. 134). This meaning cannot be found outside of the original author, but rather discovered through his intended meaning based upon the meaning assigned to the words in a particular context. Johnson and Stallard suggest that this approach is similar to the method Ezra used when reading the writings of Moses and how Israel heard the law of God based upon the plain or normal sense of the word and then came to understanding (Johnson, 1990, p. 9; Stallard, 2000, p. 15).

Within the Bible, there are two authors—human and divine—and inerrantists affirm the duality of both. The meaning is discovered by understanding the author's words in the context of the entire Bible. The affirmation of divine authorship precludes the possibility that the co-human author did not communicate the intended meaning that God desired. God, who worked through His human agent and communicated His intended meaning without violating the will of the human author, ensured that His meaning could be understood. So exactly what is meaning?

Meaning is that which has "relation to other words and to other sentences which form its context" (Osborne, 1991, p. 76). Meaning is not found exclusively in the word,

for the word carries with it a range of meaning that has been assigned based upon the cultural and literary context. Meaning is found in the text of the passage (Arp, 2000, p. 40) as it is placed there by the author. Inerrantists believe that the intended meaning of the words of all of Scripture can be understood within its context.

Conclusion

In this section, the researcher has attempted to show the historical, biblical, and theological reasons for the justification of doctrine of inerrancy. A brief glance a church history affirms that the true Church has always affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy and not until the 19th century was the doctrine of inerrancy substantially challenged. The SBC began in 1845 and by 1925 had developed a doctrinal statement, in part to refute the belief in an errant Bible. The SBC faced a similar challenge in the 1960s and 1970s with faculty of the six seminaries affirming inerrancy, but then affirming through "double speak" a contrary position. Resurgence within the SBC, led by Patterson and Pressler, reversed the theological climate with a series of pro inerrancy presidents that would eventually produce faculty who would affirm inerrancy. The culmination was the BFM 2000, which tightened the definition of inerrancy to include the phrase: "therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy and all Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation" (Wooddell, 2007, sec. 467). A review of the evangelical theology of inerrancy was explored to show that God has revealed Himself to humanity through Scripture and His Son. There is exegetical evidence within Scripture to affirm that the entire sixty-six books are inerrant. Jesus also affirmed the inerrancy of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, in Matthew 5:18-20 while the apostles brought additional affirmation to the New Testament through the two main passages of II

Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:20-21. The canonical process of the Old and New Testaments was presented to show the superiority of the Bible to other ancient texts, as well as to demonstrate how the 66 books were discovered. Finally, there was a brief overview of the role of hermeneutics in relationship to inerrancy.

The next section will transition from Evangelicals', in general, understanding of inerrancy to Southern Baptists', in particular, understanding of inerrancy. Wayne Grudem wrote *Systematic Theology*, which was published by Zondervan, in 1994. Greg Allison wrote *Historical Theology*, which was also published by Zondervan, in 2011. Both works are designed to be understood in companion of each other. Thus, while Grudem is not a Southern Baptist and Allison is a Southern Baptist, the researcher felt it would be wiser to review their books in tandem rather than as a separate section of the literature review. This is also a way to transition into the Southern Baptist theology of inerrancy.

Transition into Southern Baptist Theology on Inerrancy

The companion series of *Systematic Theology* by Grudem and *Historical Theology* by Allison designate eight chapters to the topic of the Word of God. Although all chapters are important to the topic of inerrancy, not all chapters are as significant. Grudem begins his section by addressing the different forms of the Word of God. There is the Word of God in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1), as speech by God (Gen. 1:3), as words of His personal address (Gen. 2:16-17), as speech through human lips (Jer. 1:7) and as a written form (Ex. 31:18) (Grudem, 1994, pp. 47–50). The form that Grudem focuses upon is as a written form and his first section is the canonization the 66 books of the Bible.

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The Canon of Scripture

Yahweh says to Moses, "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you" (Deut. 4:2). If the words of God cannot be added to nor subtracted from, "the extent of the canon of Scripture is therefore of the utmost importance" (Grudem, 1994, p. 54). Believers must know which words are from God and which words can be ignored. Allison begins by affirming that the Old Testament has been accepted as from God, thus no debate should be made as to which parts of the first 39 books should be trusted. "Beginning on the day of Pentecost, the church considered the Hebrew Bible to be the Word of God" (Allison, 2011, p. 37). He quotes Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, who upholds the current perspective that by the end of the fifth century BC, the Hebrew canon was well established. Not even the Apocrypha was considered Scripture (Allison, 2011). Within the New Testament, there is no record of a dispute between Jesus and the Jews over the canon of the Old Testament(Grudem, 1994). It was settled and only 39 books were considered canonical.

As to the New Testament books, Allison lists two criteria that the church used to determine canonicity: (1) apostolicity: Does this writing have an apostle as its author? Or is an apostle associated with this writing? and (2) antiquity: Has the church historically recognized the voice of God speaking to his people in this writing (2011, p. 42)? This makes the canonization not a determination process, but a recognition process. The apostle Peter displayed this recognition process of Paul's letters when he writes:

> [Paul] writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.
> His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and

unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

(II Peter 3:16)

Paul himself recognizes that he is writing Scripture when says,

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of

God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for

what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who

believe. (I Thess. 2:13)

Grudem (1994) shows where Paul recognizes Scripture from the writings of Luke.

In I Timothy 5:17-18, Paul tells Timothy that an elder is worthy of being compensated for

his work within the church and then says the Scripture states, "Do not muzzle the ox

while it is treading out the grain," followed by another quote from Scripture "The worker

deserves his wages." The first citation is from Deuteronomy 25:4 while the second quote

is not found in the Old Testament; rather, it is found in Luke 10:7. Paul is recognizing

that Luke's writings are Scripture (p.62).

Lastly, Grudem and Allison argue that believers can know that the right books are

in the canon of Scripture by two tests. First, our confidence is based upon the

faithfulness of God (Grudem, 1994, p. 65). God desires, more than we do, that His Word

is preserved and preserved accurately each word, phrase and sentence that He wished to

communicate. Second, the role of the Holy Spirit confirms the truthfulness of the Bible

(2011; 1994). "The words of Scripture speak to [our] hearts as no other book" (Grudem,

1994, p. 66), and "both the Holy Spirit and Scripture itself attest to canonical Scripture"

(Allison, 2011, p. 53).

The Four Characteristics of Scripture

Grudem and Allison list four characteristics of Scripture: (1) authority, (2) clarity, (3) necessity, and (4) sufficiency that should be highlighted when covering the topic of Scripture.

Authority. "The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbeliever or disobey God" (Grudem, 1994, p. 73). Since God created the entire universe and the earth is His creation, He knows what is best for humanity. Thus, humanity should obey His commands because they are what God has deemed most beneficial for us. So how does a creature come to the conclusion that the Bible should be obeyed? The basis of the argument is theological as revealed in Scriptures.

First, the Bible claims to be the Word of God. The phrases "thus says the Lord" was used around 430 times in the Old Testament and "it is written" 70 times in the New Testament which is short hand for quoting the authority of the Old Testament (BibleWorks, 1998). It is identical in the ancient world to "Thus says the King" (Grudem, 1994, p. 74). When the king speaks his word is an edict and is expected to be obeyed. Similarly when God speaks orally, through his prophets, apostles, or writes his commands himself he communicating to his creation what he expects will be obeyed. Allison comments "this indefectible authority of Hebrew Scriptures was a the heart of Jesus' pronouncement that 'the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35)'" (2011, p. 80). Scripture determined what the follower of God should believe and obey.

Second, as the believer reads the Bible, the Bible confirms its' own authority. How is this accomplished, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul says "This is what we

speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (I Cor. 2:13). He goes on to say "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). This work of the Holy Spirit confirms to believers that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God and only those who have the Spirit can discern this. Jesus states, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Augustine urged his church they must undoubtedly believe "on the testimony of those witnesses by whom the Scriptures, justly called divine, were written" (Allison, 2011, p. 82) for it is our foundational authority.

Third, the Bible is self-attesting. That is, the Bible is the foundational authority by which no other authority can be appealed. If the Bible could be declared authoritative, then the Bible "would be subordinate in authority to the thing to which we appealed to prove it to be God's Word" (Grudem, 1994, p. 78). The objection made is that this would seem a circular argument and at one level this is correct. For all "absolute authority must ultimately appeal to that authority for proof; otherwise, the authority would not be an absolute or highest authority" (1994, pp. 78–79). An example would be stating that reason is the final authority. But how would one *know* that reason is the final authority unless one presupposes that reason *is* the final arbitrator.

Last a syllogism is used. A. God cannot lie or speak falsely (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; Numbers 23:19). B. Therefore, all the words of Scripture are completely true and without error (Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 119:89). C. God's words are the ultimate standard of truth (John 17:17) (Grudem, 1994, p.83). Allison (2011) demonstrates that since the days

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of the church fathers until ICBI, the church has always affirmed the authority of the Bible as binding for Christian living.

Clarity. "The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it" (Allison, 2011, p. 120; Grudem, 1994, p. 108). How does this definition fit with the words of Peter who said that Paul's words were difficult to understand (II Peter 3:15-16) and our experiences with difficult passages that scholars are unable to agree upon?

First, Grudem (1994) and Allison (2011) remark that Peter did not say that Paul's words were *impossible* to understand, but that his letters were difficult to understand. And those who struggle the most to understand are ignorant and unstable people who seek to distort the Scriptures. Some of Paul's writings maybe hard to comprehend, but this does not mean that with proper guidance from the Holy Spirit and diligent study a believer cannot grasp what Paul desired to communicate. It only means that some of Paul's letters, at first glance, are not as easily understood as others.

Second, Grudem (1994) emphasizes that Scripture teaches its own understanding of clarity. Moses commands the nation of Israel to instruct their children in the commandments of Yahweh. "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). The implication is that parents were to be able to understand the commandments of Yahweh, teach their children, and be able to daily discuss the meaning that they learned from the commandments. Psalm 1:2 "But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

and on his law he meditates day and night" and Psalm 19:7 "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple" both reveal that a believer is able to ponder upon the word of God and come to an understanding of it and it is designed so that even naïve people can become wise. God's word was designed to be understood with clarity

Allison (2011) underscores that the church fathers continued to affirm the clarity of the Scriptures. During the Middle Ages when most people were illiterate and part of the church a division was created between the laity and clergy. For a period of time only the church leaders interpreted the Scriptures and the laity was dependent church leaders' interpretation. This was challenged by John Wycliffe who stated, "it seems first that the knowledge of God's law should be taught in the language which is best known, because this knowledge is God's Word" (p.127).

Luther, at the beginning of Reformation, affirmed the precision of the Bible by arguing for a twofold clarity: (1) "the external clarity of Scripture" which is the proclamation of the Bible to the whole world and (2) "the internal clarity of Scripture" (p.128) which is the clarity of the Scripture proclaim through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus for Luther, Scripture is clear in and of itself while at the same time only those who have the Holy Spirit residing within them are truly able to understand.

Zwingli made a greater distinction between the external and internal Word of God by arguing that the external Word of God is preached before the church but it is the internal Word of God that produces faith. This internal Word of God was not a canon within a canon, as if only parts of the Scriptures are truly divine. On the contrary, Zwingli believed the clarity of the Scripture was reserved to the work of Holy Spirit

revealing the truth of the Bible to believers only. Similar to the Parables of the Sower, the reading of Scriptures does not automatically produce faith; rather, Scripture in conjunction with the work of the Holy Spirit does. This internal Word of God communicates to some hearts of men but not all men.

The Post-Reformers offer additional comments to the clarity of Scripture by stating (1) "clarity does not do away with the attentive study of Scripture" (2) "clarity does not do away with the teaching ministry of the church" and (3) "the doctrine [of clarity] does not eliminate the need for spiritual illumination [by the Holy Spirit]" (Allison, 2011, pp. 137–138). The continuation of the clarity of Scripture has been affirmed most recently by the ICBI, "we affirm the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin" (2011, p. 139).

Why do so many believers struggle to understand the Bible if it is so clear? Grudem (1994) and Allison (2011) pointedly claim three reasons: (1) a lack of faith or hardness of heart, (2) improper methods of interpreting the Scriptures thus, an improper application to ascertain the meaning of the text and, (3) a lack of maturity. "Scripture envisions itself being read/heard and understood in a local church context in which both God-ordained, gifted leaders encourage and assist the members of the assembly to comprehending clear Scripture" (2011, p. 140). Those believers who willfully choose to avoid attending church are most likely hard-of-heart and are most likely unable to learn proper methods of interpretation, which in return, produces immaturity.

Necessity. "The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's Will, but is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character

and moral laws" (Allison, 2011, p. 142; Grudem, 1994, p. 116). Paul lists, in Romans

10:13-17, a chain of events that must precede salvation. Those who call upon the Lord

for salvation must first believe in the message, but the message must be spoken before

believing, but before that someone must speak the message, and before that someone

must be sent to speak the message. The implication is that the Bible is necessary for

salvation. Grudem (1994) quotes the apostle Peter who is on trial before the Sanhedrin

says, "there is no salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heave given

among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), and the apostle Paul who declares,

"there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as

a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:5-6). The implication is that only divine revelation as

preserved in the Scriptures is able to reveal the means by which lost individuals can come

into right relationship with God. No amount of human wisdom could conclude that

salvation is found in the person of Jesus. God must reveal what happened in history to

the person of Jesus on the cross or else humanity would view him like Socrates – a man

who died for his beliefs but not God in the flesh. Scripture is necessary or else humans

aimlessly wonder how to get in right relationship with God.

The church has always affirmed "the necessity of Scripture means Christians must

engage in daily Bible reading" (Allison, 2011, p. 145). The Bible is not only necessary

for salvation but also necessary for spiritual life. Jesus says in Matthew 4:4, which is a

quote from Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that

proceeds out of the mouth of God." Spiritual nourishment originates from God's mouth

and the only source where one can find God's preserved words is in the Scripture.

Sufficiency. Adding to the idea of necessity of the Scripture is the concept of the

sufficiency of the Scripture. "The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained

all the words of God which he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive

history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for

trusting him perfectly and for obeying him perfectly" (Allison, 2011, p. 142; Grudem,

1994, p. 127). Scriptural support and evidence of this doctrine can be found in the

second letter that Paul wrote to Timothy "and that from childhood you have known the

sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through

faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15). Grudem (1994) comments, "this is an

indication that the words of God which we have in Scripture are all the words of God we

need in order to be saved: these words are able to make us wise 'for salvation'" (p.127).

Allison (2011) accentuates the commentary of Aquinas who tended to rely upon

philosophy more than other medieval writers. Yet even he concluded the sufficiency of

Scripture "it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed

human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation" (p.148). Not only is

the Scripture necessary but it is sufficient in that salvation can only be found in divine

revelation.

Grudem (1994) gives some practical applications for the sufficiency of Scripture.

First, "The sufficiency of Scripture should encourage us as we try to discover what would

have us to think or do" (p. 131). This does not mean Scripture addresses specifically

every situation in life, but Scripture is sufficient to guide us for all situations are not new

"under the sun." Second, "We are to add nothing to Scripture, and that we are to consider

no other writings of equal value" (p. 131). Unlike the many false religions, believers in

Christ find their foundation for living in the Bible. No other book is its equal. A third application is "Nothing is sin that is not forbidden by Scripture either explicitly or by implication" (p.132). As believers we need to be careful to not place personal preferences upon other believers such as attending movie or visiting beach; rather, allow the Holy Spirit to guide people. And fourth, "Sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that in our doctrinal and ethical teaching we should emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and be content with what God has told us in Scripture" (p.134).

Inerrancy of Scripture

If the Bible does not speak truthfully about all that it states then the authority, clarity, necessity and sufficiency of the Scripture are meaningless. If the Scriptures are not truthful then "the presence of just one error in Scripture would not mean that all of Scripture is in error" but it would lead "that any part could be in error" (Allison, 2011, p. 102). And if the Scripture is filled with errors then the canon would be meaningless too. For the compilation of books, albeit impressive historically, would be no different than ancient writings – it would be human but not divine.

"The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact" (Grudem, 1994, p. 91). The "Bible always tells the truth" and "tells the truth concerning everything it talks about" (p.91). The trustworthiness of the Scriptures is not subject to human evaluation "and does not stand in need of proof or authentication from any outside source" (Allison, 2011, p. 106). It is a self-authenticating authority. No other higher standard exists than the Word of God. "The church has historically acknowledge that Scripture in its original manuscripts and properly interpreted is completely true and without any error in everything that it affirms"

(2011, p. 99). Beginning with the church fathers such as Irenaeus, to medieval age such as Aquinas, to the reformation period such as Luther and Calvin, continuing with the Princetonians of Hodge, Hodge and Warfield, and to the current day signers of the Chicago Statement (1978) there is has been a continuous affirmation of inerrancy of the Bible. During that same time, there have been various heresies that the church has rejected, but in spite of the heretical teachings, a firm belief in the inerrancy of the Bible persevered. Allison (2011) remarks that the early church understood the truthfulness of the Bible in two ways: (1) The affirmation of Scripture corresponds to reality and (2) Scripture does not contract Scripture (p.100).

Grudem grounds his understanding of the inerrancy of the Bible in numerous verses; we will discuss a few of them.

> *God cannot lie.* "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19)
>
> *The total truthfulness and reliability of the Bible.* "And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him" (Proverbs. 30:5).
>
> *God's Word is the ultimate standard.* "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17).

The "Bible always tells the truth" and "tells the truth concerning everything it talks about" (p.91).

There a few key challenges to the doctrine of inerrancy that Grudem addresses that, once answered, will allow the believer to have a greater confidence in this doctrine. The first challenge is that, phenomenological language does not distort inerrancy. A prime example is the rising and setting of the sun. The Bible is not deceiving the reader with this type of language; rather, it is accurately describing what the human senses continual to observe. A second objection is that the use of approximations does not make the Bible inaccurate. Jesus feeding the 5,000 is not inaccurate if the number were 4,895 or 5,123. Both would be about 5,000 in approximation. If the number were 10,000 then an approximation would be errant. And the third and probably the most cited challenge is the claim that inerrancy only applies to the original manuscripts thus view the Bible as meaningless since we only have copies. As stated in the section, *The Canonical Text,* there is sufficient evidence to show that Christians possess a 99% representation of the original text. While in seminary, one of the researchers' professors commented that he believed that Christians had over 100% of the text and the goal of textual criticism was to eliminate the dross. Mistakes in the copies (and believers do have them) are indications of mistakes that men made copying from the original (1994). In fact, declaring that there are mistakes is inadvertent way to affirming what critics seek to deny – that there must be an original text that scholars are able to ascertain from the copies.

Conclusion

This section examined the writings of Grudem and Allison on the topic of inerrancy and related issues. Both authors affirmed the canonicity of the Bible, its authority, clarity, necessity and sufficiency. All of these affirmations are meaningless unless the Bible is the inerrant and trustworthy Word of God. The reason we looked at

them together was to transition from what Evangelicals have said on inerrancy to what Southern Baptist have declared. Allison, who is a Southern Baptist, in conjunction with Grudem, has created a companion series describing the orthodox position on inerrancy. The next section will look exclusively at a sample population of current Southern Baptist theologians on inerrancy. Knowing what present-day Southern Baptists believe will establish the standard by which Florida Southern Baptist members will be compared.

Affirmation of Southern Baptists Theologians on Inerrancy

The following section will look at a sampling of prominent Southern Baptist theologians' view of inerrancy. Those theologians are Joseph Wooddell, Paul Enns, Leo Garrett, David Dockery, David P. Nelson and Millard Erickson. Each of their views represents their theological reflections and, to this researcher, aligns with the articles of the BFM 2000. They are professors, presidents, pastors, and men who seek to articulate the general consensus of the doctrine of inerrancy within the SBC. The question may be asked why these select men and not others and the answer is because these men have written extensively on the topic, published their thoughts and their textbooks to reflect teaching that aligns most accurately with the articles of the BFM 2000. To read their views, this researcher believes, will be like reading what BFM 2000 intended the membership of the SBC to understand on the doctrine of inerrancy

Joseph Wooddell

A commentary on the BFM 2000 was produced in 2007 with Wooddell adding clarity to the topic of the Scriptures. He comments, "BFM 2000 rightly refers to Scripture as holy, inspired, perfect, divine, true, trustworthy, the supreme standard; it also strongly implies that Scripture is inerrant ('truth, without any mixture of error')"

(Wooddell, 2007, location 465). Regarding the doctrine of inerrancy, he articulates "the Bible is inerrant simply means that it makes no false—and thus no contradictory—claims" (location 518). This involves an affirmation that inerrancy gives "Scripture the benefit of the doubt over any would-be competitors" (location 518). To deny "inspiration and inerrancy places man above God" (location 640) which the SBC has sought to avoid. Garret argues that the Southern Baptists have always placed their submission to nothing but the Bible (Garrett, 2009), but a brief review of Southern Baptist history leads the reader to the contrary. There has been controversy concerning inerrancy. However, given the SBC understanding of inerrancy, to what degree do current Southern Baptist theologians affirm this doctrine?

Paul Enns

This researcher knows Paul Enns personally. Enns attends the same church as the author and his family in the Tampa, Florida area. His book, *The Moody Handbook of Theology,* has a section designated to the topic of Bibliology. His book is designed to cover not only systematic theology but also biblical, historical, dogmatic, and contemporary theology. He ensures the key topics are addressed.

Divine Origins. Enns begins his book by developing the theme of the divine origin of the Bible. "Some thirty-eight hundred times the Bible declares 'God said' or 'Thus says the Lord'" (Enns, 1989, p. 154). A few examples are Numbers 4:1, Deuteronomy 4:2, and Ezekiel 1:3. The reliable testimony of Moses, David, Daniel, Nehemiah, Paul and Peter all affirm that this book has divine origins. He compares the Bible to the Koran which was compiled by one individual, Zaid ibn Thabit, and around 650 A.D., all variant copies were destroyed to produce a unified text. In contrast, the

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Bible was composed over 1,500 years by 40 authors and apparently many "did not know of the other writers of Scripture" (p.155), yet there is unified and harmonious consistency between all 66 books. Implication is that the divine hand of God ensured His word was preserved in both testaments.

The Bible is a revelation from God and "the important emphasis here is that God discloses truth about Himself that man would not otherwise know" (p.156). There are two kinds of revelation – general and special. The Bible is in the category of special revelation. Within special revelation there are two avenues by which God has revealed himself – through Jesus Christ and through the Scriptures (Hebrews 1:1-2). Since the Bible alone reveals Jesus, "special revelation is restricted to the Scriptures" (p.158).

Inspiration of the Bible. Because the Scriptures are of divine origin, Enns argues "inspiration is necessary to preserve the revelation of God." "If God has revealed Himself but the record of that revelation is not accurately recorded, then the revelation of God is subject to question. Hence, inspiration guarantees the accuracy of the revelation (p.159). The superintendence of God's Holy Scriptures whereby there is both a divine and human author is significant for Enns. Based upon II Timothy 3:16 the focus is not on God breathing *into* the Word of God; on the contrary, the focus is upon God breathing *out* his words through human authors to produce the final product – the Scriptures. Enns denies Natural Inspiration – that there is nothing supernatural about inspiration; Spiritual Illumination – that only the writers were inspired rather than the text; Partial Inspiration – that only parts of the Bible are inspired; Conceptual Inspiration – that only the concept were inspired not the words; Divine Dictionary theory of Inspiration – that God dictated the words and the authors wrote passively what they heard without any human input; and

he denies the Neo-Orthodox View – that the Bible only becomes the Word of God as the reader encounters Christ (pp. 160 –162). Instead, Enns affirms the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures – that each and every word of the Bible was breathed out by God (pp. 162 – 166). Based upon the testimony of Jesus, inspiration is affirmed to include (1) the whole of the Bible (Matthew 5:17-18), (2) every part of the Bible with Jesus quoting from Deuteronomy (Law), Psalm (Writings) and Isaiah (Prophets), (3) every word of the Bible where Jesus makes a point to declare himself the "I am" (Ex. 3:6 cf. John 8:58), (4) every letter of the Bible (Matthew 5:18) and include the New Testament (John 14:26). Enns then adds the testimony of Paul (I Timothy 5:18) who quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 in the same sentence to declare that both are scripture, the classic statement found in II Timothy 3:16, and the testimony of Peter, who in II Peter 1:21 proclaims "that no Scripture is produced as a result of human will; rather, it is the product of the superintending power of the Holy Spirit" (p.165).

Inerrancy of the Bible. Enns then states that the word *inspiration* no longer means without error, even though that was its intended meaning. Rather, the word *inerrancy* has been added to the word *inspiration* to clearly communicate that the word of God is fully truthful in all that affirms. He quotes E.J. Young's definition of inerrancy: "by this word we mean that the Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error, they are exempt from the liability to mistake, and incapable of error in all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth" (p.167). Complemented with this definition is the syllogism of Ryrie "God is true (Romans 3:4), the Scriptures were breathed by God (2 Tim. 3:16); therefore, that Scriptures are true (since they came from the breath of God who is true)" (p.167). A few clarifications are added to the understanding of inerrancy to

include that (1) inerrancy allows for individual style of the writers, thus writers wrote in their own style while at the same writing the exact words that God desired; (2) inerrancy allows for a variety of details to explain the same event, thus each writer when translating the words of Jesus in Aramaic (supposed) into Greek were allowed to use slightly different words to express the same idea; (3) inerrancy allows for a departure from standard grammatical rules, thus each writer did not write in error if he wrote in a style that was not consistent with the grammatical rules of his day; (4) inerrancy allows for problem passages, thus some passages may be difficult to fully understand, but this is due to human limitations, not the clarity of the text; and (5) inerrancy does not teach error or contradiction, as a result writers may communicate in mysteries or paradoxical manners but in a manner that does not undermine the truthfulness of passage in question (pp.167-169).

Enns affirms the canonicity of the Bible, reliability of Old and New Testaments, and ends with discussing the illumination of the Bible and briefly a guide to interpreting the Bible correctly. Regarding the doctrine of illumination and hermeneutics (science of interpreting the Bible), a key concept is "it is necessary that man receives God-given help in understanding the Bible (I Cor. 2:11)" (p.175) through the work of the third person of the trinity – the Holy Spirit. This illumination comes about through the human effort of the literal, grammatical, historical and literary approach to interpreting the text. Using this approach does not guarantee that the Holy Spirit will provide the correct interpretation, but it does ensure a more accurate interpretation that most faithfully represents the author's intended meaning.

Summary of Enns. Enns affirms the inerrancy of the Bible and, as a Southern Baptist pastor and professor, articulates a faithful expression of the BFM 2000. The Bible, according to Enns, has divine as well as human origins. The writers expressed in their own style the exact words that God desired to communicate. God, through the process of breathing-out the text (inspiration), ensured, based upon his character, that all of his words would be true and without error. Believers can have full confidence that the Bible contains no errors and that it is true in all it says.

James Leo Garrett Jr.

James has been Professor of Systematic Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Baylor University and visiting professor at the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary. His two volume book, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical,* dedicated about 100 pages towards the issues related to Bibliology.

Special Revelation. There are two phases of biblical revelation. One was that which came through the prophets in the Old Testament and the second was that which came through Jesus Christ and His apostles. The ways in which God revealed Himself were diverse. Garrett describes two major forms from Ramm: (1) "biblical revelation as anthropic" and (2) "analogical" (2011, p. 107). Anthropic means biblical revelation that is marked by human characteristics and analogical means biblical revelation that bridges the gap of the incomprehensibility of God to the know-ability of God. To know God, He must discourse in a way that is transmittable to humans and that we can understand once communicated. He adds that God has entered time and space and that real historical events took place (i.e., crossing the Red Sea, Resurrection of Jesus, etc...) and yet "the

sense of the significance of Israel's history, which came to be expressed in Israelite history writing, was not shared by contemporary nations" (p.110). This means when the walls that protected the city of Jericho came down, the nation of Israel knew more than what the citizens of Jericho knew – Yahweh captured the city and was allowing Israel to slowly dwell in the Promised Land (Deut. 7:22). When Jesus died on the cross, this was not a martyr like Socrates; rather, this man was God in the flesh that was absorbing the Father's entire wrath because of humanity's sin. No Roman soldier could have interpreted this historical event as such without special revelation. The fullness of special revelation came in the person of Jesus Christ who was the exact image and likeness of God (John 1:1, 14-18, Hebrews 1:3). "The Christian claim is that revelation in Christ is ultimate, not be superseded by Buddha or Krishna or Mohammed or Baha'u'llah (1817-92), or Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-44), or Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1920) or Sun Myung Moon (1920 – 2012)" (p.119-120)!

Biblical Inspiration. "The Bible is the product of revelation…the Old Testament did not produce God's revelation to Israel. Likewise, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ produced the New Testament; the New Testament did not produce the revelation of God in Jesus Christ" (p.121). Garret contends that there should be distinction (not a separation) between revelation and the Bible. The Bible is the sole instrumental role where by the special revelation of God is preserved, but the Bible did not produce revelation; rather, the Bible is the collection of God's special revelation preserved in written form (p.122).

Garrett defines inspiration through the writings of Strong and Erickson to mean that the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the human authors which ensured

that their writings recorded the progressive revelation accurately (p.123). Strong sought to emphasize "the sufficiency of the Bible to lead human beings to Christ and salvation" while Erickson sought to emphasize "by virtue of inspiration the Bible is the Word of God" (p.123). The duration of this "inspiration was intermittent" (p.125), thus meaning the biblical writers did not continuously produce inspired works either in word or in letter, as evidenced by Paul's confrontation of Paul (Gal. 2:14-21).

The Bible is a special revelation from God and breathed out by God. Garrett affirms the process by which the Bible was canonized, unity of scripture, Biblical criticism and hermeneutics. The last two sections he addresses are the truthfulness and authority of the Bible.

Truthfulness of the Bible. Garrett inquires "in what sense Christians can and do affirm that the Bible itself is the Word of God…and to what extent the Bible is dependable, reliable, and truthful" (p.179)? To discover these answers, Garrett begins with what the Bible communicates about itself. Old Testament passages speak of the "word of the Lord," and "thus says the Lord;" however, he concludes that the sense of these phrases "enables [prophets] to declare that word to Israel/Judah. But those assertions were not seemingly directed to the written form of the prophetic book" (p.179). In the New Testament, terms such as "the Words (logos) of God," "the word (rhema) of the Lord" "appl[ies] in a sense of the gospel or the preached message concerning Jesus…or to Jesus Christ himself" (p.180). So where does the Bible declare itself "the word of God"? He suggests possibly John 10:35 and Hebrews 4:12, although even there he is not convinced. It is not that Garrett does not believe the Bible is the Word of God; rather, if one is seeking "firm proofs for the credibility of the Bible and 'wish[es] to

prove to unbelievers that the Bible is the Word of God [they] are acting foolishly.'
[Because only the] 'inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit' through faith 'can this be
known'" (p.181). Hence, the Bible can be trusted because it is the Word of God, but
proofs that the Bible claims to be Word of God seems not as convincing. The Bible is the
Word of God because it was supervised by God Himself and God does not lie.

This leads to the topic of inerrancy. Garrett does not give his definition of
inerrancy; rather, he cites Nicole's, Erickson's, and Feinberg's definitions. The most
succinct is Erickson's "the doctrine that the Bible is fully truthful in all of its teachings"
(p.183). As to the fuller explanation, Garrett lists three levels by which the
truthfulness/inerrancy of the Bible is understood. Level one, "the reliability of the
present-day text of the Old Testament and of the New Testament in respect to its
transmission as books from the hands of its human authors" (p.185). This means that due
to modern discoveries of ancient Greek and Hebrew texts, the readers can be assured that
the text in their hands is a reliable translation of the original autographed text. Level two,
"the truthfulness of the Bible in respect to its basic religious and moral message: the level
of doctrine and ethics" (p.186). This means the Bible is also accurate in all doctrinal
matters and those scholars who deviate are subject to expected critique. Level three, "the
reliability of the Bible in all chronological, geographical, literary, and scientific matters:
the level of total or complete inerrancy" (p.187). This means not only are the copies
accurate duplications and a translation, doctrine is accurately preserved, but even those
areas where the Bible touches upon areas of history and science the Bible speaks
truthfully.

Authority of the Bible. Within the stream of Christianity, Garrett reveals the major options concerning the ranking of the authority of the Bible. The first option is "the Bible is normally qualified by the authority of the church and tradition in Catholic Christianity" (p.204). This is the position of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Bible is authoritative, but not the final authority. Option two is the Protestant view which "has placed at the top of the list of channels of religious authority the Bible, or the canonical Scriptures" (p.204). This is the position of most classical forms of Protestant Christianity. The Bible is the supreme and final authority. The third option is "the divine-human encounter" that stresses "an immediate transference of the divine truth with a self-authenticating principle of authority" (p.205). This is the position of Western Catholic mystics, Quakers and possibly present-day practitioners of the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. The divine-human experience does not contradict scripture but neither is it subject to scripture. The experience can trump the Bible insofar that it does not contradict the written revelation of scripture.

As to the phrase, *sola scriptura,* that the Bible is the only or sole channel of religious authority, Garrett asserts that a better phrase of *suprema scriptura* "the Bible always ranks and stand above church and tradition, the divine-human encounter, and any other possible channel of religious authority" (p.207). As a Southern Baptist, Garrett encouraged the SBC to incorporate this language in the BFM 2000.

Summary of Garrett. Garrett affirms the inerrancy of the Bible and, as a Southern Baptist professor of theology, articulates a faithful expression of the BFM 2000. The Bible, according to Garrett, has divine as well as human origins. The writers expressed in their own style the exact words that God desired to communicate. God,

through the process of breathing-out the text (inspiration), ensured, based upon his character, that all of his words would be true and without error. Believers can have full confidence that the Bible contains no errors and the Bible is true in all it says.

David S. Dockery and David P. Nelson

Dockery is the president of Union University, a Southern Baptist College. He authored *Christian Scripture* and co-authored with Nelson chapter three of *A Theology for the Church*. Nelson is the provost at the University of North Carolina School of Arts. Prior to serving at UNCSA, he was the dean of the faculty and vice-president of academic administration at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Between both autographs, they dedicate about 125 pages towards the issues related with Bibliology.

Special Revelation. "All knowledge of God comes by the way of revelation" (Dockery & Nelson, 2007, p. 118). For anyone to know God, God must reveal himself in such a way that humanity can comprehend himself sufficiently. Revelation "means an uncovering, a removal of the veil, a disclosure of what was previously unknown" (Dockery, 1995, p. 16). This is not a revelation that is universal; rather, a revelation that only select individuals are privileged to. An example Matthew 16:17 where Jesus responds to Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Christ: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was revealed to by man, but by the my Father in Heaven" (2007, p. 119). There are three stages of special revelation – the first is "God's redemptive work in history, which ultimately centers in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ" and the second is "the written source of God's revelation, the Bible" and the third is "the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals and in the corporate life of the church" (2007, p.120-

121). The affirmation of Jesus in the second stage as the central figure of divine revelation is significant to the Christian faith.

Jesus Christ and the Bible. To understand Jesus one must read the Bible, and within the Bible Jesus shows "how the Scriptures of the Hebrew Bible spoke a figure to come and his understanding that he was that figure" (2007, p.125). The Old Testament includes two different lines of the teaching regarding the Messiah – one as redeemer (Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12) and two as king (Psalms 3 and Isaiah 9:6-7) (1995, 2007). Jesus revealed how He fulfilled the Hebrew Scriptures, thus validating the reliability of the foretold prophecies. Jesus also "accepted the full authority and divine authorship of the Old Testament" (1995, p.28). For example, when Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and tested by the Evil One, His line of defense was to quote the words of Moses. He viewed the story of Jonah as a true account and paralleled it to His death, burial and resurrection, and saw His own life as prefigured in the Psalms (2007). In addition, Jesus authenticated the writings of the Apostles when He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and help them remember all that He instructed them during His earthly ministry. The "words of Jesus became the foundation and cornerstone of the church and its writings" (1995, p.29). Jesus as the God-man also points to the divine-human relationship that exists within the Scriptures.

Inspiration. Dockery and Nelson note that numerous passages address the divine aspect of Scripture. For example: Psalm 19:7-11, Matthew 5:17-19, and Hebrews 1:1-2; but the primary texts of the Bible that affirm its own divine inspiration are II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:19-21. The word *inspiration*, which is a translation of *theopneustos*, means God-breathed. The words of each author originated from the breath of God.

Quoting Marshall, "no New Testament author would have conceived of the possibility of a book being classified as Scripture and yet not being inspired by God" (2007, p.133). Based upon the two primary texts, Dockery and Nelson draw the following conclusions on the doctrine of inspiration:

> (1) Scripture is verbally inspired. That is all the *words* (*graphe*, i.e., "writings") of the Bible are inspired. (2) The Scriptures are completely inspired. That is, *all* (pas) the words are inspired. (3) The Scriptures are divinely inspired. That is, *God* inspired all the words of Scripture. (4) We affirm that not only the texts of the Bible, but the human authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit. (2007, p.134)

Concursive inspiration is the overarching framework by which they attempt to describe the human and divine interaction in the compilation of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit in conjunction with the human authors penned the texts. "God's purpose is accomplished through the writer, but the emphasis of the Spirit's word is on the product of inspiration" (2007 p.142). The Spirit led the writers to research, reflect, and subsequently write and edit (2007, 1995). The experiences of each author were different, "yet throughout their lives God was working to prepare and shape them, even their own vocabulary, to pen the Scriptures" (2007, p.143). A couple concepts that Dockery and Nelson add to inspiration that the other authors did not are: (1) "revelation written through a human author in a particular language (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) can be intelligible to those who know other languages" (2007, p.144) and (2) "God's revelation can be communicated through authors who lived two thousand years ago in various cultures" (1995, p.45-46). The implication of both of these assertions is that those of us in the English speaking world can be reassured that our translation of the Bible from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek over

two thousand years ago is an inspired text in so much as it faithfully reflects the original manuscripts.

The various views of inspiration are commented upon – the Dictation View, which is an emphasis upon the actual dictation of God to human writers; the Illumination View, which is an emphasis upon the author's ability to express themselves in eloquent language; the Encounter View, which is an emphasis upon the Bible *becoming* the Word of God as the reader encounters Christ through this process; the Dynamic View, which is an emphasis upon the Spirit giving the authors great freedom to express themselves without a need for each word to be supervised by God; and finally, the Verbal/Plenary View, which is the most acceptable model of inspiration within the evangelical community which emphasizes the supervision of the Spirit upon all the portion of Scripture, even to the very words, while affirming the unique style of each author (1995, pp. 50–55). There is a mystery involved in this process that the Scriptures do not reveal to readers. Nevertheless the readers can have confidence that the Scriptures are truthful and authoritative.

> **Truthfulness of Scripture.** Inerrancy according to Dockery and Nelson means:
> when all the facts are known, the Bible (in its original writings) properly
> interpreted in light of the culture and communication means that had developed
> by the time of its composition will be shown to be completely true (and therefore
> not false) in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author, in
> all matters relating to God and his creation. (2007, p. 157)

They add the following commentary to the definition that provides clarity to the statement.

1. *When all the facts are known,* which means the reader may not have all the data necessary this side of the Second Advent to fully comprehend the difficult texts.

2. *The Bible (in its original writings),* which means inerrancy applies to all of the original manuscripts and to the degree that the translations accurately represent the original words. All English translations rest upon a solid foundation.

3. *Properly interpreted,* this means the "biblical text cannot be separated completely from hermeneutical issues" (2007 p. 158). The authors intended meaning is what the reader seeks to ascertain. Not what the original readers would have interpreted, although that might be helpful at times, but rather what the authors intended the reader to always conclude after interpreting the text.

4. *Is completely true (and therefore not false),* which means the Bible "is inerrant in terms of truthfulness and falseness rather than in terms of error or lack of error" (p.158). This moves the discussion away from grammatical errors or the lack of precision it seems to report.

5. *In all matters,* which means the Bible is not limited to religious matters but includes matters of history and science "in light of the author's intended level of precision" (p.159).

Dockery and Nelson speak briefly to the authority, sufficiency, clarity, and the formation of the canon of scripture. Each area articulates an orthodox position. They conclude with a practical implication for the church.

Impact upon the Church. The Bible is the believer's ultimate standard of authority which reveals the commands of God in way that can cut across "cultural, geographical, and temporal differences between the biblical world and our setting" (2007,

p. 172). We are to obey the imperatives of the text, which will result in training in righteousness, transformation of the community of believers, and authentic worship. They comment that obedience to the Bible "will transform our performance-oriented church meetings into authentic worshipers that will turn our church programs into service that are pleasing to God" (p.174). Believers must confess their belief in the "divine inspiration, total truthfulness, and supreme authority of the Bible" (p.174).

Summary of Dockery and Nelson. Dockery and Nelson both affirm the inerrancy of the Bible, as a President of a Southern Baptist college and a as Dean of a Southern Baptist Seminary. They both articulate a faithful expression of the BFM 2000. The Bible, according to Dockery and Nelson, has divine as well as human origins. The writers expressed in their own style the exact words that God desired to communicate. God, through the process of breathing-out the text (inspiration), ensures, based upon his character, that all of his words would be true and without error. Believers can have full confidence that the Bible is true in all it says and contains no errors.

Millard J. Erickson

Erickson has taught theology at Western Seminary, Bethel University, and Baylor University. He is an ordained Baptist minister and his work, *Christian Theology,* has influenced the Southern Baptist community for the past 30 years. *Christian Theology,* although shorter in length (85 pages) compared to other authors is more philosophical in nature. Combined with the text of the Bible, his work is probably the most systematic of all of the Southern Baptist authors. Erickson is not a Southern Baptist; however, because of his close affinity to Southern Baptist theology, ordination as a Baptist, and his

influence upon Southern Baptist theology, the researcher has included a special section of his theology on Bibliology in general and inerrancy in particular.

Special Revelation. "By special revelation we mean God's manifestation of himself to a particular person at definite times and places, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with him" (Erickson, 1998). Humanity, because of the sin of Adam, no longer views God correctly through his creation and is in need of a fuller revelation that can explain how a restored relationship can be obtained with Yahweh. General revelation, although sufficient to reveal God, combined with the human will, which is diminished by sin, cannot accurately interpret the data. Thus, in order for humanity to understand God's plan of salvation, He gave them special revelation. Erickson gives several aspects to special revelation. First, the revelation is "personal" (p.203). That is, God has revealed Himself in ways that reflects personality. God made a personal covenant with Abraham, He spoke to Moses from the burning bush, the Psalms "contain numerous testimonies of personal experiences with God" (p.203), and Paul states in Philippians 3:10: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death." Second, the revelation is "anthropic" (p.204). That is God, who transcends time and space and who is different than His creation, must communicate to humans in ways that humanity can understand. God has spoken to us in "human language and human categories of thought and action" (p.204) that we can comprehend. In some sense, God must condescend (in the positive sense of the word) for our benefit so that we can grasp His revelation. Third, the revelation is "analogical" (p.205). That is, God "draws on those elements in the human universe of knowledge that can serve as a likeness of or partially convey the truth

in the divine realm" (p.205). Thus when God says he *knows*, he knows like humans know, but he also knows like a being that has omniscient knowledge. We do not have the capacity to fully grasp God's understanding of all-knowing knowledge, but we do have analogous understandings of the word *know*. There is a difference *in degree* in the concept of *knowing*, but not a difference *in kind*. This is the idea of revelation as analogical, and now Erickson turns to the modes of revelation.

Modes of Revelation. There are four main modes of revelation by which God reveals his special revelation. The first mode is through historical events. That is, "God's self-revelation is to be found in his personal action in history or his 'mighty deeds'" (p.207). The events contained in the Bible are not inferences to the revelation of God, they are not shells in which the revelation was clothed, but rather the revelation *is* history. "The events actually were and are revelation of himself, God's attributes are actually seen in, not simply inferred from, his actions in history" (p.211). The second mode is divine speech. Throughout the Bible the phrases such as "thus says the Lord" or "The word of the Lord came to me" all indicate "God does not merely demonstrate through his actions what he is like; he also speaks, telling us about himself, his plans, his will" (p.212). This does not mean that every word in the Bible are God's very words; on the contrary, the authors recorded human words, phrases, and dialogues. The third mode is the incarnation which, according to Erickson, is the "most complete modality of revelation" (p.215). Jesus was (is) God in the flesh. When he spoke, God spoke. When the second person of the Trinity took on human flesh through the birth of Mary, He was revealing to humanity what God was like in human form. Jesus not only revealed the Father, He even "dared to place his message over against what was written in the

Scriptures, not as contradicting, but as going beyond or fulfilling them (Matt. 5:17)" (p.215). Jesus was fully God and fully man, revealing to His creation what the presence of God is like in flesh. The fourth mode is scripture as revelation. Since revelation can include propositional truth, "then it is of such a nature that it can be preserved...written down or inscripturated" (p.221). Erickson expounds "if revelation is defined as only the actual occurrence, the process or the *revealing*, then the Bible is not revelation...if, however, it is also the product, the result or the *revealed*, then the Bible may also be termed revelation" (p.222). The focus of the next section will be how God preserved His special revelation.

Inspiration. While there were individuals who experienced the special revelation of God in time and space, it is impossible for future generations to experience that unless God decides to duplicate the event or the event is preserved in some form or fashion. Inspiration of Scripture means the "supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God" (p.225). This process of inscripturation through inspiration ensures that God's special revelation can be preserved.

So how does one know if the Bible is the inspired and preserved words and acts of God in history? Erickson begins with citing the Bible itself as its own foundation. Both 2 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Peter 1:20-21 reveal that all of scripture was breathed out by God (inspired) and that no interpretation of the special revelation was a result of a human endeavor; rather, scripture came about by the work of God in the third person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit. Erickson highlights the main theories of inspiration – intuition

theory that the authors were religious geniuses, the illumination theory that the Holy

Spirit heightened the authors' normal powers, the dynamic theory that only the concepts

and thoughts were inspired, the verbal theory that the Holy Spirit inspired the words that

the authors chose, and the dictation theory that the authors passively wrote what the Holy

Spirit dictated. The view that Erickson espouses is close to the verbal theory, in which

he argues that (1) every word of scripture was inspired, even those false statements which

the characters of events make, are still the words that God desired to be preserved, (2)

"Scripture was so intense that it extended even to the choice of particular words" (p.239)

and, (3) "the process is not generally unlike mental telepathy, although more internalized

and personalized" (p.243). Inspiration contains both the writer and the writing. The

words of the scripture can be trusted to be completely accurate. This leads to Erickson's

concept of inerrancy.

Inerrancy. The condensed definition of inerrancy is "the Bible is fully truthful in

all of its teachings" (p.247). Erickson lists seven ways inerrancy is understood by

theologians and the significance this has upon the concept. First is *absolute inerrancy,*

which states that the Bible accurately treats matters of science and history. There are no

discrepancies between science, history, or matters of faith. Second is *full inerrancy,*

which is similar to the former, but in areas of science, the authors describes in

phenomenological language. Thus, the sun rising and setting is not an accurate scientific

description, but rather a phenomenon of what we know to be rotation around the sun.

Third is *limited inerrancy,* which means the "writers [of the Bible] were subject to the

limitations of their time" (p.248). Had the writers known 21st century science, they

would have written differently; thus one can find "errors" in the text but not intentional

errors to deceive the reader. Fourth is *inerrancy of purpose,* which is the idea the Bible was written to bring individuals to saving faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, not to communicate scientific or historical issues that later may possibly contradict the text. Fifth is *theory of accommodation,* which means there are "errors" in the text only because humans are prone to mistakes; thus "even on doctrinal matters, the Bible contains a mixture of revelational and nonrevelational [unintended errors] elements. Sixth is that the revelation of God is *non-propositional,* which means "the Bible itself is not revelation, its function is to point us to the person-to-person encounter which is revelation rather than to convey propositions" (p.250). The Bible contains errors, but those errors are not the word of God. A final view is that inerrancy is *not relevant.* It is similar to the sixth view with a focus upon ignoring the minor discrepancies and "hearing what the Bible is really trying to tell us about our relationship to God" (p.250). Erickson defines in greater length his definition of inerrancy as "the Bible, when correctly interpreted in light of the level to which culture and the means of communication had developed at the time it was written, and in view of the purposes for which it was given, is fully truthful in all that it affirms" (p.259). His definition asserts inerrancy is what the Bible affirms, not what it reports, there is cultural setting, there is purpose for each text, there is phenomenological language, there are difficulties with the text that at this moment cannot be fully explained but one would be wise to wait, and that correct interpretative methods will produce an accurate understanding of the text.

Summary of Erickson. Erickson affirms the inerrancy of the Bible and, as a professor of theology who taught at one Southern Baptist college and as an ordained Baptist minister, he articulates a faithful expression of the BFM 2000. The Bible,

according to Erickson, has divine as well as human origins. The writers expressed in their own style the exact words that God desired to communicate. God, through the process of breathing-out the text (inspiration), ensures, based upon his character, that all of his words would be true and without error. Believers can have full confidence that the Bible is true in all it says and contains no errors.

Conclusions of Southern Baptist Theologians

Joseph Wooddell, Paul Enns, Leo Garrett, David Dockery, David P. Nelson and Millard Erickson all affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. Each has articulated a faithful expression of the BFM 2000. The Bible, according to them, has divine as well as human origins. The writers expressed in their own style the exact words that God desired to communicate. God, through the process of breathing-out the text (inspiration), ensures, based upon His character, that all of His words would be true and without error. Believers can have full confidence that the Bible is true in all it says and contains no errors.

Brief Literature Review of Social Science Results

Since 2007, the Pew Forum, the Barna Group, and Answers in Genesis have reported results that indicate the degree to which Americans affirm the doctrine of inerrancy of the Bible. None have looked at Southern Baptists in general or at Florida Southern Baptists in particular.

The Pew Report

A nationwide survey of 36,000 Americans conducted between May 8 to August 13, 2007 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, detailed the "statistics on religion in America and explore[d] the shifts [that took place] in the U.S. religious

landscape" (The Pew Forum, 2007). About 78% of all Americans listed themselves as

Christian: 51% as Protestant, and 26% as Evangelical. Evangelicals, who would align

more generally with the doctrine of inerrancy, when asked "Do you believe in God or a

universal spirit?" the response was 98% were absolutely or fairly certain in this belief.

When asked "Which comes closest to your view? The Bible is the word of God or the

Bible is a book written by men and is not the word of God?" the response was 59%

affirmed the Word of God as literally true word for word; 29% affirmed the Word of

God, but not literally true word for word; 12% either affirmed the Bible was not the

Word of God or did not know or refused to answer. This would mean about 40% of the

American population does not affirm the inerrancy of the Bible.

Barna Group

The Barna Group, from 2007 to 2013, has surveyed 1000 randomly sampled

adults on three different occasions to ascertain their perceptions on the reliability of the

Bible. In 2007, the Barna Group showed "that six well-known Bible stories are accepted

as literal truth by an average of two out of three adults" (Barna Group, 2007). The stories

were (1) Jesus Christ rising from the dead with 75% accepting as literally true, (2) Daniel

surviving the lion's den with 65% accepting as literally true, (3) Moses parting the Rea

Sea with 64% accepting as literally true, (4) David killed the giant warrior, Goliath with

63% accepting as true, (5) Peter walking on the water with 60% accepting as literally

true, and (6) God creating the universe in six days with 60% accepting as literally true.

In 2009, the Barna Group examined "how different generations of American adults view

and use the Bible" (Barna Group, 2009). The generational categories were Mosaic (18-25

years old), Busters (26-44 years old), Boomers (45-63 years old), and Elders (64+ years

old). Those with the highest view of the Bible: "that is the actual word of God and should be taken literally, word for word" (2009) were the Elders with 34%, followed by Mosaics and Busters with 27%, and then Boomers with 23%. Finally, in 2013 (March 27), because of the success of the History Channel's miniseries *The Bible*, the Barna Group wanted to discover "what do Americans actually think about the Bible?" (2013). While almost 90% own a Bible, those who affirm the inerrancy of the Bible are shrinking. About 20% of Americans who read the Bible at least four times per week affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. Another 39% affirm the inerrancy of the Bible but don't read it as often. However, those who are neutral or antagonistic toward the Bible have increased in percentages from 35% of the population in 2011 to 40% of the population. This would mean, as the Pew Forum results indicate, that about 40% of the American population does not affirm the inerrancy of the Bible.

Answers in Genesis

Ken Ham and Britt Beemer, in *Already Gone,* wanted to know which young people were leaving the church, why they were leaving and if anything can be done to reverse this trend. America's Research Group interviewed 1000 people "between the age of 20 and 30 who once attended conservative or 'evangelical' churches" (Ham, Beemer, & Hillard, 2009, location 265). Their definition of attendance was "they attended church every week or nearly every week when they were growing up" (location 265). Thus, their results were skewed to show research toward conservatives rather than the general church population. In regard to the topic of inerrancy, almost 40% believed the Bible contains errors; 30% don't know; and 30% do not believe the Bible contains errors. When asked, "Do you believe all the accounts/stories in the Bible are true/accurate?" the

response was roughly: 43% no; 38% yes; and 18% did not know. However, when asked, "Do you believe all the books of the Bible are inspired by God?" the response was approximately: 62% yes; 21% no; and 17% did not know. Within the conservative and evangelical churches, affirmation in the inerrancy of the Bible by young people is alarmingly low.

In 2011, Ken Ham and Greg Hall wrote *Already Compromised* to report what 200 Christian colleges believed about the Bible. They interviewed 312 people from presidents, academic deans/vice presidents, heads of science departments, and heads of theology/religion departments. With parents spending thousands of dollars to send their children to a setting where they believe the Bible will be viewed as authoritative in all areas it claims to express, the results were surprising. With regard to key New Testament beliefs: virgin birth of Jesus, substitutionary death on the Cross, literal heaven and hell, second coming of Christ, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus, there was between 96.5% to 99% affirmation; but when dealing with the Old Testament, divergent views emerged. When asked "do you believe the Genesis 1-2 account of creation is literally true?" (p. 52) 73% of the religion professors said yes and 79% of the science professors said yes. When asked "do you believe in God creating the earth in six literal 24-hours days?" (p.53) 57% of religion professors said yes and 71% of the science professors said yes. When asked "do you believe the Flood was worldwide, local or nonliteral?" the religion professors said yes 57% to worldwide, 31% to local, and 12% to nonliteral and the science professors said yes 56% to worldwide, 41% to local, and 3% to nonliteral. When asked of the presidents and vice presidents "do you believe in the inspiration of the Scripture?" (p.84) presidents said *yes* 98.1% and vice presidents said *yes* 98.7%; yet

when asked "do you believe in the inerrancy of the Scripture?" (p.84) the presidents said *yes* 21% and vice presidents said *yes* 78%. Finally, as to the infallibility of the scripture, the presidents said *yes* 17% and the vice presidents said *yes* 95%. Ham and Hall concluded with a question: "What does inerrancy really mean?" (p.184) if the early chapters of Genesis are not interpreted in a literal manner. Does this affect the degree to which inerrancy is affirmed?

Conclusion

Social science research in the past five years has shown that very little has been done to ascertain the belief structure of what Southern Baptists in general and Florida Southern Baptist in particular believe in regard to the doctrine of inerrancy. There is a void in the social science literature that demonstrates the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm inerrancy. The goal of this dissertation is to reveal through statistical research those beliefs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Introduction

Research is "a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, p. 2). This mixed-method study researched the belief structure of Florida Southern Baptist members' affirmation in the doctrine of inerrancy. The goal of the study was to provide accurate and detailed information that leadership within the Florida Baptist Convention can be able to use to improve their proclamation of this essential doctrine, as well as, highlight the importance as a foundational teaching to the Great Commission. The results are subject to the degree to which this study can be generalizable to the greater population which is the Southern Baptist Convention. Thus, the purpose of this mixed-method study is to explore the variables that have influenced the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Questions

Florida Southern Baptists affirmation in inerrancy has not been researched. To ascertain their degree of affirmation of this essential Christian doctrine, the following questions served as the sub-problem questions that revealed their range of understanding of inerrancy. Thus, this mixed-method study explored the variables that have influenced the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. The

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subsequent questions guided the collection and analysis of the data for the current research study:

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 1$: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 2$: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 3$: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 4$: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_05: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_06: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Data Collection Procedures

Research was conducted through the strategy of mixed-methods. Mixed-methods as an approach has emerged as a new paradigm from the social science wars that "contains elements of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, p. 9). Mixed-methods research is an "approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms" with the result "that the overall strength of the a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Quantitative research "is used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena" while qualitative research is "used to answer questions about the complex nature of the phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, p. 94). Because quantitative research "captures a fleeting moment in time" and at best can extrapolate from conjecture "the state of affairs over a longer timer period" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, p. 184), interjected throughout the survey instrument there were

a series of qualitative opened-ended questions to probe in-depth. These open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express the reasons for their current belief in the degree to which they affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. To ascertain the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of inerrancy through only quantitative questions may not explain the inner workings of such prescribed beliefs. The advantage of mixed-methods research is that multiple sources from quantitative and qualitative data are collected to form triangulation. Triangulation occurs when "multiple data sources converge onto consistent conclusions…to support a particular hypothesis or theory (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, pp. 155, 99). Thus, when quantitative and qualitative data are united, the convergence of the two methods yield results that otherwise might not be validated when researched through only one method (p.109).

The type of mixed method research implemented was the *Sequential Explanatory Strategy*. *Sequential Explanatory Strategy* "is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data in the first phase of research followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results" (Creswell, 2009, p. 209). The result will be that qualitative data "can be used to shed light on the quantitative data" and "generate a rather rich and comprehensive picture" of the researched topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, pp. 109–110).

Through the research of American's Research Group, Inc. (ARG) the quantitative and qualitative phase of data collection were implemented to determine the variables that influence the degree to which FSB members affirm inerrancy. ARG was founded by C. Britt Beemer in 1979 as a research and strategic consulting firm. The list of ARG's

clients includes many of the nation's top retailers, leading brands, investors, and entrepreneurial companies. ARG's consumer telephone surveys were conducted by a dedicated, well-trained group of researchers with frequent monitoring and quality-assurance procedures. Results were compiled by their staff of market research professionals (Beemer, 2011). ARG has produced statistical research for *Answers in Genesis* to aid in the production of two books, *Already Gone* and *Already Compromised.* Beemer is also the author of *The Customer Rules, Predatory Marketing* and *It Takes A Prophet To Make a Profit.*

To obtain the necessary data to answer the research questions, the responses from the Bible Inerrancy Test (BIT) were collected. This was followed by an analysis of variance test (ANOVA). ANOVA is "a test for the difference between two or more means" (Salkind, 2007, p. 388). ANOVA was implemented to determine if the null hypothesis should be accepted or reject. Subsequent to the ANOVA test, the data was gathered, examined, and coded for more in-depth analysis. Finally an executive summary of the results were compiled into a document of three to four pages to be distributed to an expert panel to comment on the findings of the BIT.

An expert panel provided interpretative guidance to the results of the responses. This group was an expert panel of pastors, teachers, and academicians of who are members of Florida Southern Baptist churches associated with the Tampa Bay Baptist Association. Their participation assisted the researcher in interpreting the results of the gathered quantitative and qualitative data. Leedy and Ormrod state that focus groups should be used when "the researcher is having difficulty interpreting what he or she has observed" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, p. 146), that no more than 10-12 people participate,

and the discussion lasts no more than two hours. Krueger adds, "one-to-one interviews are not able to capture the dynamic nature of this group interaction" (1988, p. 44). Therefore, the researcher implemented an expert panel to provide expertise analysis and interpretation of the data. The researcher moderated the expert panel by providing eight open-ended questions that could be probed for more in-depth inquiry. These eight questions were selected based upon the results of the BIT that highlight the belief structure of FSB. When the quantitative and qualitative data were combined with expert panel analysis the result were a fuller rich description of the degree to which FSB affirm the doctrine of inerrancy.

Population and Sample

The population of FSB membership is 1,009,080 (Florida Baptist Convention, 2013). Leedy and Ormrod offer the following guidelines for sample size:

- For small populations with a fewer than 100 survey the entire population.

- For populations between 100 to 500 survey 50% of the population.

- For populations around 1,500 survey 20% of the population.

- Beyond populations of 5,000 a sample size of 400 will be adequate (2004, p. 207). For all research questions, a sample of 500 FSB members were surveyed.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

For all research questions, American's Research Group, Limited, Inc. gathered the data of 502 FSB members through a methodology that representatively sampled the top twenty metropolitan areas in Florida through random calling (Appendix A). According to the president of ARG, Britt Beemer, there were about 14 phone calls made for every completed survey. The top twenty metropolitan areas represent 91.5% of the entire

population of the state of Florida. This form of sampling is called multistage that is, "when it is impossible or impractical to compile a list of the elements composing the population" (Creswell, 2009, p. 148). A stratified sample of the population will be implemented so that a more accurate representation of the FSB members within the state of Florida are captured (Creswell, 2008). To acquire a stratified representative sample of FSB members within the state of Florida, 384 respondents were needed at a 95 percent confidence level. This number was obtained by taking the number of FSB membership of 1,009,080 (Florida Baptist Convention, 2013) and using the online Survey System sample size calculator (http://www.surveysystem.com). ARG randomly surveyed and gathered data of 500 FSB members through their phone calling service based upon the stratified sample data.

Limitations of Generalization

The results of this study are limited to Florida Southern Baptist membership. Due to the cultural, geographical, and economic distinctive of Southern Baptist members in Florida, research findings may not necessarily generalize to the following groups:

1. Southern Baptist members in other states.

2. Evangelical congregates who attend churches of similar theological beliefs. However, the results of this study may be transferable in so much as church members share similar characteristics with Florida Southern Baptist members.

Instrumentation

In order to accomplish the purpose of this research, an assessment of belief in the doctrine of inerrancy of randomly selected Florida Southern Baptist members was made using the Biblical Inerrancy Test (BIT). The BIT was developed by the researcher in

conjunction with ARG and the approval of an expert panel A. Following the collection of the data, a focus group of an expert panel B of pastors, teachers, and academicians was consulted to properly interpret the results.

Formulation of the Biblical Inerrancy Test

The process for developing the BIT was as follows: A series of 58 questions were composed with a Likert-scale of *Totally agree, Agree, Disagree,* and *Totally disagree.* An expert panel A was comprised of Edward Buchanan (Ph.D.), Travis Bradshaw (Ph.D.), James Porowski (Psy.D.), and Britt Beemer (President of ARG). They reviewed the initial questions of the first form of BIT. Recommendations were made and the BIT was revised to improve its validity and reliability. The revised form of BIT was again reviewed by the expert panel A and final changes were made. The BIT was then administered to 10 random Florida Southern Baptists consisting of six men and four women. As a result of this pilot study, further improvements were made until the expert panel A and the researcher agreed on the final product. The final form of the BIT was 68 questions composed of 21 open-ended (qualitative) questions and 47 Likert-scale (quantitative) questions. The BIT was indiscriminately administered through ARG's random calling of the top twenty metropolitan areas representing 91.5% of the entire population of the state of Florida.

Statistical Measures

To obtain the necessary data to answer the research questions, the responses from BIT were collected. The responses to the questions were gathered, summarized, and tested for correlation coefficient. Additionally, an executive summary of the results was compiled into a three to four-page document that was distributed to the expert panel B. This document highlighted the results and listed eight key questions that the expert panel

B was asked to comment upon. The expert panel B met to provide interpretative guidance on the results in general and to the eight questions in particular.

Role of the Researcher

This researcher designed the BIT survey instrument for the 500 FSB members. Questions were compiled and then examined by the expert panel A. After approval from the expert panel A, the questions were sent to ARG to be randomly administered to 500 FSB members. The researcher's knowledge in the areas of theology, biblical studies, and social science research prepared him for implementation of BIT, the collection of the data from the 500 FSB members, and to moderate open-ended questions for the expert panel B that analyzed the results.

Contribution of the Research

Once the results were tabulated and the data was analyzed, the research revealed the degree to which, if any, Florida Southern Baptist members affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy. The result also revealed if the leadership of Southern Baptist resurgence since the 1980s has influenced a sample population of the SBC, namely the FSB, to affirm this doctrine. Since the inerrancy question nearly split the SBC, it would be valuable to ascertain if the SBC leadership has influenced its membership concerning the doctrine of inerrancy.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE BIBLE INERANCY TEST

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-method research project was to understand to what degree Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The Southern Baptist Convention formulated the BFM 2000 to add clarity that they affirmed a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. The extant literature reveals a gap in the research. That is, the general membership within the SBC had not been previously surveyed to determine the degree to which, if any, they affirm this doctrine of inerrancy. Thus, this researcher sought to know to what degree, if any, did a sample population of their convention – namely the Florida Southern Baptists, affirm this belief.

To ascertain Florida Southern Baptists' degree of affirmation of this essential Christian doctrine, the following questions served as the sub-problems that reveal their range of understanding of inerrancy. These questions guided the collection and analysis of the data for the current research study.

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H₀1: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

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H_02: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_03: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_04: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_05: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_06: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

A Sample Population

A total of 502 Florida Southern Baptist (FSB) members were survey by American's Research Group (ARG). Each FSB member was asked 68 questions composed of 21 open-ended (qualitative) questions and 47 Likert-scale (quantitative) questions. The data for the quantitative results was compiled, sorted, and entered into SPSS, the leading statistics software for the social sciences. The data for the qualitative results were compiled, sorted, and enter by hand by the researcher.

Demographics and Results of the Analyzed Data

Prior to an examination of the actual sub-problems, an overview of the results of each question would be helpful. Knowing the results of each question can aid in understanding better the characteristics of Florida Southern Baptists and to what degree, if any, they affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy. The following questions were asked and the results were tabulated into tables.

Table 1

Q1. Do You Feel All the Accounts/Stories in the Bible are True?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	306	61.0
Agree	158	31.5
Disagree	26	5.2
Totally disagree	12	2.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 61.0%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

31.5% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 5.2%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.4%.

Table 2
Q2. Do you feel all the books of the Bible are true?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	349	69.5
Agree	145	28.9
Disagree	4	0.8
Totally disagree	4	0.8
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 69.5%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

28.9% and both *Disagree* and *Totally disagree* garnered 0.8%.

Table 3
Q3. Do you feel other holy books like the Koran are also inspired by God?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	47	9.4
Agree	46	9.2
Disagree	201	40.0
Totally disagree	208	41.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally disgree* at 41.2%. The second highest response rate was *Disagree* at 40.0. and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 9.4%, and then *Agree* at 9.2%.

Table 4

Q4. Do you feel the Bible is true and trustworthy in all matters?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	314	62.5
Agree	151	30.1
Disagree	26	5.2
Totally disagree	10	2.0
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 62.5%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

30.1% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 2.0%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.0%.

There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 5

Q5. Why do you believe the entire Bible is NOT true?

	Frequency	Percent
I believe some parts are true	9	1.7
Some parts are exaggerated, questionable, or embellished	7	1.4
There are many translations	4	0.8
Written by man	4	0.8
Various other responses	10	2.0
Total	34	6.8

Question five was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 34 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *I believe some parts are true* at 1.7%. The second highest response rate was *some parts are exaggerated, questionable, or embellished* at 1.4%. This was followed by *there are many translations* at 0.8%, and then *written by man* at 0.8%. The various other responses accounted for 2.0%. The 34 responses accounted for 6.8% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe the entire Bible is true.

Table 6
Q6. Why do you believe the entire Bible is true?

	Frequency	Percent
My Christian belief/faith	121	24.1
It is the Word of God/Scripture	105	20.9
It was inspired or instructed by God	52	10.4
What I was taught	44	8.8
Various other responses	146	29.1
Total	468	93.2

Question six was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 468 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *My Christian belief/faith* at 24.1%. The second highest response rate was *it is the Word of God/Scripture* at 20.9%. This was followed by *It was inspired or instructed by God* at 10.4%, and then *What I was taught* at 8.8%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 29.1%. The 468 responses accounted for 93.2% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe the entire Bible is true.

Table 7

Q7. Do you feel the Bible contains errors?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	32	6.4
Agree	42	8.4
Disagree	174	34.7
Totally disagree	254	50.6
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally disagree* at 50.6%. The second highest response rate was

Disagree at 34.7% and this was followed by *Agree* at 8.4%, and then *Totally agree* at

6.4%.

Table 8

Q8. Do you feel Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	374	74.5
Agree	118	23.5
Disagree	2	0.4
Totally disagree	7	1.4
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 74.5%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

23.5% and this was followed by *Totally disagree* at 1.4%, and then *Disagree* at 0.4%.

There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 9

Q9. Why do you believe that Jesus was NOT born of a virgin?

	Frequency	Percent
Not humanly possible	6	1.2
Not in all the Gospels	1	0.2
He was a son of a man	1	0.2
Total	8	1.6

Question nine was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were eight responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Not humanly possible* at 1.2%. This was followed by *Not in all the Gospels* at 0.2%, and then *He was a son of a man* at 0.2%. There were no other responses. The eight responses accounted for 1.6% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe Jesus was not born of a virgin.

Table 10

Q10. Why do you believe that Jesus was born of a virgin?

	Frequency	Percent
Found in the Bible, Bible says, Believe the Bible	153	30.5
Christian belief/faith	74	14.7
Mary was a virgin	57	11.4
Bible is true, factual, trustworthy	44	8.8
Various other responses	147	29.3
Total	475	94.6

Question 10 was open ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 475 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Found in the Bible, Bible says, Believe the Bible* at 30.5%. The second highest response rate was *Christian belief/faith* at 14.7%. This was followed by *Mary was a virgin* at 11.4%, and then *Bible is true, factual, trustworthy* at 8.8%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 29.3%. The 475 responses accounted for 94.6% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe Jesus was born of a virgin.

Table 11

Q11. Do you feel Jesus is God?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	316	62.9
Agree	87	17.3
Disagree	59	11.8
Totally disagree	40	8.0
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 62.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

17.3% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 11.8%, and then *Totally disagree* at 8.0%.

Table 12

Q12. Do you feel the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	347	69.1
Agree	120	23.9
Disagree	16	3.2
Totally disagree	19	3.8
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 69.1%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

23.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 3.2%, and then *Totally disagree* at 3.8%.

Table 13

Q13. Do you feel the only way to God is by placing your faith completely in Jesus Christ?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	371	73.9
Agree	121	24.1
Disagree	7	1.4
Totally disagree	3	0.6
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally agree* at 73.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 24.1% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 1.4%, and then *Totally disagree* at 0.6%.

Table 14

Q14. Do you feel Jesus was a man and fully God?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	341	67.9
Agree	126	25.1
Disagree	24	4.8
Totally disagree	10	2.0
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 67.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

25.1% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 4.8%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.0%.

There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 15

QI5. Why do you NOT believe that Jesus was a man and fully God?

	Frequency	Percent
He was a man, but not God	2	0.4
He wasn't God until he died on the cross	1	0.2
He was God's son, not a god	1	0.2
Not possible	1	0.2
Became a man	1	0.2
Total	6	1.2

Question 15 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were six responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *He was a man, but not God* at 0.4%. This was followed by *He wasn't God until he died on the cross* at 0.2%, *He was God's son, not a god* at 0.2% and *Not possible* at 0.2%. There were no other responses. The six responses accounted for 1.2% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe Jesus was a man and fully God.

Table 16

Q16. Why do you believe that Jesus was a man and fully God?

	Frequency	Percent
Because the Bible says so/Faith	209	41.6
He was God's Son	51	10.2
He was born, created, or made by God	45	9.0
Taught at home/church	40	8.0
Various other responses	64	12.7
Total	409	81.5

Question 16 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 409 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Because the Bible says so/Faith* at 41.6%. The second highest response rate was *He was God's Son* at 10.2%. This was followed by *He was born, created, or made by God* at 9.0%, and then *Taught at home/church* at 8.0%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 12.7%. The 409 responses accounted for 81.5% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that Jesus was a man and fully God.

Table 17

Q17. Do you feel Jesus died by crucifixion on a cross?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	415	82.7
Agree	80	15.4
Disagree	2	0.4
Totally disagree	5	1.0
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 82.7%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

15.4% and this was followed by *Totally disagree* at 1.0%, and then *Disagree* at 0.4%.

Table 18

Q18. Do you feel Jesus' dead body was laid in a tomb?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	405	80.7
Agree	95	18.9
Disagree	0	0.0
Totally disagree	2	0.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 80.7%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

18.9% and this was followed by *Totally disagree* at 0.4%, and then *disagree* at 0.0%.

Table 19

Q19. Do you feel there were eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after His resurrection?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	386	76.9
Agree	100	19.9
Disagree	7	1.4
Totally disagree	4	0.8
Missing	5	1.0
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 76.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

19.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 1.4%, and then *Totally disagree* at 0.8%.

Table 20
Q20. Do you feel Jesus arose from the dead after three days in the grave?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	393	78.3
Agree	85	16.9
Disagree	13	2.6
Totally disagree	9	1.8
Missing	2	0.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 78.3%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

16.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 2.6%, and then *Totally disagree* at 0.4%.

There were two missing responses that accounted for 0.4%.

Table 21

Q21. Why do you NOT believe that Jesus arose from the dead?

	Frequency	Percent
Because he was still alive	7	1.4
No proof	2	0.4
He was unconscious	1	0.2
Not possible	1	0.2
Total	11	2.2

Question 21 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 10 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Because he was still alive* at 1.4%. The second highest response rate was *No proof* at 0.4%. This was followed by *He was unconscious* at 0.2%, and then *Not possible* at 0.2%. The 10 responses accounted for 2.2% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe that Jesus arose from the dead.

Table 22

Q22. Why do you believe that Jesus arose from the dead?

	Frequency	Percent
Bible says/It is written/Bible is True	190	37.8
There were witnesses	62	12.4
My faith/belief/trust	61	12.2
Jesus predicted it	56	11.2
Various other responses	104	20.7
Total	473	94.2

Question 22 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 473 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Bible says/It is written/Bible is True* at 37.8%. The second highest response rate was *There were witnesses* at 12.4%. This was followed by *My faith/belief/trust* at 12.2%, and then *Jesus predicted it* at 11.2%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 20.7%. The 473 responses accounted for 94.2% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that Jesus arose from the dead.

Table 23
Q23. Do you feel Jesus is coming back?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	404	80.5
Agree	95	18.9
Disagree	2	0.4
Totally disagree	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 80.5%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

18.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 0.4%, and then *Totally disagree* at 0.2%.

Table 24

Q24. Do you feel God, through Moses, changed the Nile River into blood?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	336	66.9
Agree	130	25.9
Disagree	19	3.8
Totally disagree	17	3.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 66.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

25.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 3.8%, and then *Totally disagree* at 3.4%.

Table 25

Q25. Do you feel Jonah was inside of a whale/fish for three days and lived to tell about it?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	351	69.9
Agree	119	23.7
Disagree	23	4.6
Totally disagree	9	1.8
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally agree* at 69.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 23.7% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 5.2%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.4%.

Table 26

Q26. Do you feel Daniel was thrown into a pit with lions and was not hurt?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	353	70.3
Agree	121	24.1
Disagree	17	3.4
Totally disagree	11	2.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally agree* at 70.3%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 24.1% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 3.4%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.2%.

Table 27

Q27. Do you feel David killed a giant named goliath by using a sling and stone?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	361	71.9
Agree	119	23.7
Disagree	14	2.8
Totally disagree	8	1.6
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 71.9%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

23.7% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 2.8%, and then *Totally disagree* at 1.6%.

Table 28

Q28. Do you feel Moses parted the Red Sea and the nation of Israel walked on dry ground?

	Frequency	Percent	
Totally agree	337	67.1	
Agree	119	25.7	
Disagree	24	4.8	
Totally disagree	11	2.2	
Missing	1	0.2	
Total	502	100.0	

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally agree* at 67.1%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 25.7% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 4.8%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.2%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 29

Q29. Why do you believe that stories/accounts like Jonah and whale/fish or Daniel in the lion's den are NOT true?

	Frequency	Percent
The stories are fictional/dramatized	7	1.4
The stories make a point, but not true	6	1.2
The stories were told by people who did not witness them	6	1.2
The stories seem too far-fetched	5	1.0
Various other responses	6	1.2
Total	30	6.0

Question 29 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 30 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *The stories are fictional/dramatized* at 1.4%. The second highest response rate was *The stories make a point, but not true* at 1.2%. This was followed by *The stories were told by people who did not witness them* at 1.2%, and then *The stories seem too far-fetched* at 1.0%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 1.2%. The 30 responses accounted for 6.0% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe that stories/accounts like Jonah and whale/fish or Daniel in the lion's den are true.

Table 30

Q30. Why do you believe that stories/accounts like Jonah and whale/fish or Daniel in the lion's den are true?

	Frequency	Percent
Bible says/It is written/Bible is True	221	44.0
God's miraculous power	25	5.0
Taught by parents or church leaders	24	4.8
Eye witnessed testimony	16	3.2
Various other responses	62	12.4
Total	348	69.3

Question 29 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 348 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Bible says/It is written/Bible is True* at 44.0%. The second highest response rate was *God's miraculous power* at 5.0%. This was followed by *Taught by parents or church leaders* at 4.8%, and then *Eye witnessed testimony* at 3.2%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 12.4%. The 348 responses accounted for 69.3% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that stories/accounts like Jonah and whale/fish or Daniel in the lion's den are true.

Table 31

Q31. Do you feel the earth is less than 12,000 years old?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	146	29.1
Agree	96	19.1
Disagree	170	33.9
Totally disagree	89	17.7
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Disagree* at 33.9%. The second highest response rate was *Totally*

agree at 29.1% and this was followed by *Agree* at 19.1%, and then *Totally disagree* at

17.7%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 32

Q32. Do you feel Adam and Eve were real historical people created about 12,000 years ago or less?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	196	39.0
Agree	180	35.9
Disagree	66	13.1
Totally disagree	60	12.0
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally agree* at 39.0%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 35.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 13.1%, and then *Totally disagree* at 12.0%.

Table 33

Q33. Do you feel God created the earth in six literal 24-hour days?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	310	61.8
Agree	145	28.9
Disagree	45	9.0
Totally disagree	2	0.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 61.8%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

28.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 9.0%, and then *Totally disagree* at 0.4%.

Table 34
Q34. Do you feel Adam and Eve were real people?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	367	73.1
Agree	123	24.5
Disagree	3	0.6
Totally disagree	9	1.8
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 73.1%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

24.5% and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 1.8%, and then *Disagree* at 0.6%

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Table 35

Q35. Do you feel dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	172	34.3
Agree	140	27.9
Disagree	129	25.7
Totally disagree	61	12.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 34.3%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

27.9% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 25.7%, and then *Totally disagree* at 12.4%.

Table 36

Q36. Do you feel dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	132	26.3
Agree	94	18.7
Disagree	205	40.8
Totally disagree	71	14.1
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Disagree* at 40.8%. The second highest response rate was *Totally agree* at 26.3% and this was followed by *Agree* at 18.7%, and then *Totally disagree* at 14.1%.%.

Table 37

Q37. Do you feel evolution is the process that God used to create humans?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	70	13.9
Agree	20	4.0
Disagree	159	31.7
Totally disagree	252	50.2
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally disagree* at 50.2%. The second highest response rate was

Disagree at 31.7% and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 13.9%, and then *Agree* at

4.0%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 38

Q38. Do you feel God used evolution to change one kind of animal to another kind?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	82	16.3
Agree	45	9.0
Disagree	182	36.3
Totally disagree	193	38.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally Disagree* at 38.4%. The second highest response rate was *Disagree* at 36.3% and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 16.3%, and then *Agree* at 9.0%.

Table 39

Q39. Do you feel dinosaurs died out before there were people on the planet?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	121	24.1
Agree	118	23.5
Disagree	161	32.1
Totally disagree	102	20.3
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Disagree* at 32.1%. The second highest response rate was *Totally*

agree at 24.1% and this was followed by *Agree* at 23.5%, and then *Totally disagree* at

20.3%.

Table 40

Q40. Do you feel humans evolved from ape-like creatures?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	70	13.9
Agree	6	1.2
Disagree	143	28.5
Totally disagree	283	56.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally disagree* at 56.4%. The second highest response rate was *Disagree* at 28.5% and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 13.9%, and then *Agree* at 1.2%.

Table 41

Q41. Because of scientific evidence, I believe that the earth is millions or billions of years old?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	82	16.3
Agree	128	25.5
Disagree	192	38.2
Totally disagree	99	19.7
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Disagree* at 38.2%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 25.5% and this was followed by *Totally disagree* at 19.7%, and then *Totally agree* at 16.3%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 42

Q42. Why do you believe that the earth is less than 12,000 years old?

	Frequency	Percent
Trust the Bible/ Bible says/It is written	141	28.1
Not sure/Not relevant/Don't know/Not important	62	12.4
Christian Belief	36	7.2
Taught at home	12	2.4
Various other responses	65	12.9
Total	289	57.6

Question 42 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 289 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Trust the Bible/ Bible says/It is written* at 28.1%. The second highest response rate was *Not sure/Not relevant/Don't know/Not important* at 12.4%. This was followed by *Christian Belief* at 7.2%, and then *Taught at home* at 2.4%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 12.9%. The 289 responses accounted for 57.6% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that the earth is less than 12,000 years old.

Table 43

Q43. Why do you NOT believe that the earth is less than 12,000 years old?

	Frequency	Percent
Science/Scientific Proof/Evidence	102	20.3
Biblical Timeline maybe different	17	3.4
Believe the earth is more than...	15	3.0
Shown Different	10	2.0
Various other responses	38	7.6
Total	182	36.3

Question 43 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 182 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Science/Scientific Proof/Evidence* at 20.3%. The second highest response rate was *Biblical Timeline maybe different* at 3.4%. This was followed by *Believe the earth is more than...* at 3.0%, and then *Shown Different* at 2.0%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 7.6%. The 182 responses accounted for 36.3% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe that the earth is less than 12,000 years old.

Table 44
Q44. Do you feel there was a global flood during the days of Noah?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	319	63.5
Agree	145	28.9
Disagree	18	3.6
Totally disagree	19	3.8
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 63.5%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

28.9% and this was followed by *Totally disagree* at 3.8%, and then *Disagree* at 3.8%.

There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 45

Q45. Do you feel Noah and his family were the only humans on earth to survive the flood?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	314	62.5
Agree	159	31.7
Disagree	19	3.8
Totally disagree	18	1.6
Missing	2	0.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 62.5%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

31.7% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 3.8%, and then *Totally disagree* at 1.6%.

There were two missing responses that accounted for 0.4%.

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Table 46
Q46. Do you feel Noah's flood was a local flood?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	25	5.0
Agree	21	4.2
Disagree	202	40.2
Totally disagree	253	50.4
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally disagree* at 50.4%. The second highest response rate was *Disagree* at 40.2% and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 5.0%, and then *Agree* at 4.2%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 47

Q47. Why do you believe that the story/account of Noah's flood was a global flood?

	Frequency	Percent
God's Word/Bible	182	36.3
Evidence of a global flood/proven/facts	77	15.3
Everything was destroyed upon the earth	39	7.8
Scientific proof/scientists	39	7.8
Various other responses	123	24.5
Total	460	91.6

Question 47 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 460 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *God's Word/Bible* at 36.3%. The second highest response rate was *Evidence of a global flood/proven/facts* at 15.3%. This was followed by *Everything was destroyed upon the earth* at 7.8%, and then *Scientific proof/scientists* at 7.8%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 24.5%. The 460 responses accounted for 24.5% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe the story/account of Noah's flood was a global flood.

Table 48

Q48. Why do you NOT believe that the story/account of Noah's flood was a global flood?

	Frequency	Percent
Embellished upon	4	0.8
Because what we know today	2	0.4
The world was not populated at that time	2	0.4
Different translations of the Bible	2	0.4
Various other responses	8	1.6
Total	18	3.6

Question 48 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 18 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Embellished upon* at 0.8%. The second highest response rate was *Because what we know today* at 0.4%. This was followed by *The world was not populated at that time* at 0.4%, and then *Different translations of the Bible* at 0.4%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 1.6%. The 18 responses accounted for 3.6% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe the story/account of Noah's flood was a global flood.

Table 49

Q49. Do you feel the Bible is the final authority in my life when I make decisions?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	273	54.4
Agree	182	36.3
Disagree	36	7.2
Totally disagree	11	2.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 54.4%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

36.5% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 7.2%, and then *Totally disagree* at 2.2%.

Table 50

Q50. Do you feel homosexual marriage is a biblically acceptable lifestyle?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	21	4.2
Agree	20	4.0
Disagree	140	27.9
Totally disagree	321	63.9
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Totally disagree* at 63.9%. The second highest response rate was *Disagree* at 27.9% and this was followed by *Totally agree* at 4.2%, and then *Agree* at 4.0%.

Table 51

Q51. Why do you believe that homosexual marriage is acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
God is a God of love/Love one another	5	1.0
Various other responses	3	0.6
Total	8	1.6

Question 52 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 8 responses. The most frequently cited response was *God is a God of love* at 1.0%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 1.6%. The eight responses accounted for 1.6% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that homosexual marriage is acceptable.

Table 52

Q52. Why do you believe that homosexual marriage is NOT acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
Against the Bible/God's word/Not biblical	89	17.7
Homosexuals cannot procreate	87	17.3
It is a sin	83	16.5
God created Adam and Eve/Marriage between man and woman	76	15.1
Various other responses	123	24.5
Total	458	91.2

Question 53 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 458 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Against the Bible/God's word/Not biblical* at 17.7%. The second highest response rate was *Homosexuals cannot procreate* at 17.3%. This was followed by *It is a sin* at 16.5%, and then *God created Adam and Eve/Marriage between man and woman* at 15.1%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 24.5%. The 458 responses accounted for 91.2% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe that homosexual marriage is acceptable.

Table 53
Q53. Do you feel abortion is acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	24	4.8
Agree	24	4.8
Disagree	184	36.7
Totally disagree	270	53.8
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally disagree* at 53.8%. The second highest response rate was

Disagree at 36.7% and this was followed by *Agree* at 4.8%, and *Totally agree* also at

4.8%.

Table 54

Q54. Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	90	17.9
No	260	51.8
Don't know	104	20.7
Missing	48	9.6
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *No* at 51.8%. The second highest response rate was *Don't know* at 20.7% and this was followed by *Yes* at 17.9%. There were 48 participates that did not response (missing) that accounted for 9.6%.

Table 55

Q55. Why do you believe abortion is NOT acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
Murder/Thou shalt not kill	116	23.1
Bible/10 Commandments	26	5.2
God's gift/ Life gift	17	3.4
Wrong	14	2.8
Various other responses	35	7.0
Total	208	41.4

Question 55 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members

surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 208 responses. The most frequently

cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Murder/Thou shalt not kill* at

23.1%. The second highest response rate was *Bible/10 Commandments* at 5.2%. This

was followed by *God's gift/ Life gift* at 3.4%, and then *Wrong* at 2.8%. The *Various*

other responses accounted for 7.0%. The 208 responses accounted for 41.4% of the 502

Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe that abortion is

acceptable.

Table 56

Q56. Why do you believe abortion is acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
Save the mother's life	28	5.6
Rape victim	23	4.6
Choice	17	3.4
Things happen	10	2.0
Various other responses	21	4.2
Total	99	19.7

Question 56 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 99 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Save the mother's life* at 23.1%. The second highest response rate was *Rape victim* at 4.6%. This was followed by *Choice* at 3.4%, and then *Things happen* at 2.0%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 4.2%. The 99 responses accounted for 19.7% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that abortion is acceptable.

Table 57

Q57. Do you feel living with your boy/girlfriend before marriage is acceptable?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	26	5.2
Agree	99	19.7
Disagree	197	39.2
Totally disagree	179	35.7
Missing	1	0.2
	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Disagree* at 39.2%. The second highest response rate was *Totally*

disagree at 35.7% and this was followed by *Agree* at 19.7%, and then *Totally agree* at

5.2%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 58

Q58. Do you feel a Christian marrying a non-Christian is acceptable according to the Bible?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	54	10.8
Agree	131	26.1
Disagree	207	41.2
Totally disagree	110	21.9
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Disagree* at 41.2%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at 26.1% and this was followed by *Totally disagree* at 21.9%, and then *Totally agree* at 10.8%.

Table 59

Q59. Do you feel the husband is the head of the household?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	211	42.0
Agree	207	41.2
Disagree	56	11.2
Totally disagree	25	5.0
Missing	3	0.6
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Totally agree* at 42.0%. The second highest response rate was *Agree* at

41.2% and this was followed by *Disagree* at 11.2%, and then *Totally disagree* at 5.0%.

There were three missing responses that accounted for 0.6%.

Table 60

Q60. Why do you believe that a husband is NOT the head of the home?

	Frequency	Percent
Both Equal/Partners	32	6.4
A woman can lead the household	14	2.8
No man in the home	5	1.0
Depends on husband's actions/faith/situation	4	0.8
Various other responses	8	1.6
Total	63	12.5

Question 60 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 63 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Both Equal/Partners* at 6.4%. The second highest response rate was *A woman can lead the household* at 2.8%. This was followed by *No man in the home* at 1.0%, and then *Depends on husband's actions/faith/situation* at 0.8%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 1.6%. The 63 responses accounted for 12.5% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do not believe that a husband is the head of the home.

Table 61

Q61. Why do you believe that a husband is the head of the home?

	Frequency	Percent
Bible says/teaches	162	32.3
Husband is the leader of the home	73	14.5
Taught/Raised	29	5.8
Protector/Provider	24	4.8
Various other responses	114	22.7
Total	402	80.1

Question 61 was open-ended, thus the Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed could give fuller responses. There were 402 responses. The most frequently cited responses were listed. The highest response rate was *Bible says/teaches* at 32.3%. The second highest response rate was *Husband is the leader of the home* at 14.5%. This was followed by *Taught/Raised* at 5.8%, and then *Protector/Provider* at 4.8%. The *Various other responses* accounted for 22.7%. The 402 responses accounted for 80.1% of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed who do believe that a husband is the head of the home.

Table 62

Q62. Do you feel the Bible permits women to be pastors just like men?

	Frequency	Percent
Totally agree	114	22.7
Agree	110	21.9
Disagree	187	37.3
Totally disagree	89	17.7
Missing	2	0.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *Disagree* at 37.3%. The second highest response rate was *Totally*

agree at 22.7% and this was followed by *Agree* at 21.9%, and then *Totally disagree* at

17.7%. There were two missing responses that accounted for 0.4%.

Table 63

Q63. Age Groups: I'm going to read you a list of age groups. Please stop me when I get to yours.

	Frequency	Percent
30 or under	52	10.4
31 - 40	114	22.7
41 - 50	133	26.5
51 -60	101	20.1
Over 60	102	20.3
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest age bracket was *41-50* at 26.5%. The second highest response rate was *31-40* at 22.7%. The third highest response rate was *over 60* at 20.3%. This was followed by *51-60* at 20.1%, and then *30 or under* at 10.4%.

Table 64
Q64. How often do you attend your church?

	Frequency	Percent
Twice a week or more	115	22.9
Once a week	252	50.2
Twice a month	88	17.5
Once a month	33	6.6
Mainly on holidays or special events	13	2.6
Missing	1	0.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Once a week* at 50.2%. The second highest response rate was *Twice a week or more* at 22.9%. The third highest response rate was *Twice a month* at 17.5%. This was followed by *Once a month* at 6.6%, and then Mainly on holidays or special events at 2.6%. There was one missing response that accounted for 0.2%.

Table 65
Q65. How often do you read your Bible?

	Frequency	Percent
4xs or more per week	110	21.9
2-3xs per week	133	26.5
Once a week	140	27.9
2-3xs per month	72	14.3
Rarely	47	9.4
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest response rate was *Once a week* at 27.9%. The second highest response rate was *2-3xs per week* at 26.5%. The third highest response rate was *4xs or more per week* at 21.9%. This was followed by *2-3xs per month* at 14.3%, and then *Rarely* at 9.4%.

Table 66
Q66. What is your highest level of education?

	Frequency	Percent
Some high school education	18	3.6
High school diploma	218	43.4
Some college education	145	28.9
Associate or technical degree	74	14.7
Bachelor degree	36	7.2
Master or Doctorate degree	11	2.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the highest

response rate was *High school diploma* at 43.4%. The second highest response rate was

Some college education at 28.9%. The third highest response rate was *Associate or*

technical degree at 14.7%. This was followed by *Bachelor degree* at 5.2%, next *Some*

high school education at 3.6%, and then *Master or Doctorate degree* at 2.2%.

Table 67
Q67. Sex? (By observation on the phone)

	Frequency	Percent
Male	153	30.5
Female	349	69.5
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, 69.5% were

female and 30.5 were *male*. This was ascertained by observation on the phone.

Table 68
Q68. Location? (Zip code was recorded)

	Frequency	Percent
North	88	22.9
Central	214	50.2
South	199	17.5
Missing	1	.2
Total	502	100.0

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed, the largest

segment of responses originated from the Central area of Florida at 50.2%. The next

largest segment of responses originated from the North area of Florida at 22.9%. This

was followed by South at 17.5%. *The Central is:* Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond

Beach, Lakeland-Winter Haven, North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, Ocala, Orlando-

Kissimmee-Sanford, Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville and Tampa-St. Petersburg-

Clearwater. *The North is:* Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, Gainesville,

Jacksonville, Palm Coast, Panama City-Lynn Haven, Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent and

Tallahassee. *The South is:* Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano

Beach, Naples-Marco Island, Port St. Lucie, Punta Gorda and Sebastian-Vero Beach.

Summary of Demographics

All of the 502 surveyed were Florida Southern Baptist members. When asked if

they believed that all of the accounts in the Bible were true, all of the books were true,

and the Bible did not contain errors the response was 85.3% to 98.4% in affirmation. At

the same time 19.8% did not believe Jesus was God, 51.6% did not believe the earth was

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less than 12,000 years old, and 17.9% believed God used evolution to create humans. Around 15.1% believed that humans evolved from ape-like creature, 18.0% believed that abortion was acceptable, 24.9% believed that living with one's boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage was acceptable, and 46.6% believed that the Bible permitted a woman to be a pastor just like a man. A more detailed analysis of the results were scrutinized by an expert panel that was presented later in chapter five.

Ages ranged from under 30 years old (10.4%), to 31 to 60 years (69.3%), and over the age of 60 (20.3%). About twenty-three percent (22.9%) attended church two times or more per week, fifty percent (50.2%) attended once a week, seventeen percent (17.5%) attended two times per month, and fewer than three percent (2.6%) attended only special occasions or holidays. Less than a quarter (21.9%) read their Bibles four times or more per week, roughly another quarter (26.5%) read two to three times per week, approximately another quarter (27.9%) read one time per week, fifteen percent (14.3) read two to three times per month, and close to ten percent (9.4%) rarely read their Bibles.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this current study sought was to ascertain the degree to which, if any, Florida Southern Baptists affirmed the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. There were six research questions that were designed to collect and analyze the data to answer this purpose of this study.

Research Question 1

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

Table 69
Affirmation of the Deity of Jesus Christ

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q8) Do you feel Jesus was born of a virgin?	74.5%	23.5%	0.4%	1.4%
(Q11) Do you feel Jesus is God?	62.9%	17.3%	11.8%	8.0%
(Q14) Do you feel Jesus was a man and fully God?	67.9%	25.1%	4.8%	2.0%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 98.0% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Jesus was born of a virgin, 80.2% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Jesus is God, and 93.2% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Jesus was a man and fully God.

Table 70
Affirmation of Inerrancy of the Bible

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q1) Do you feel all the accounts/stories in Bible are true?	61.0%	31.5%	5.2%	2.4%
(Q2) Do you feel all the books of the Bible are true?	69.5%	28.9%	0.8%	0.8%
(Q3) Do you feel other "holy" books also inspired?	9.4%	9.2%	40.0%	41.4%
(Q4) Do you feel Bible is true and trustworthy in all matters?	62.5%	30.1%	5.2%	2.0%
(Q7) Do you feel Bible contains errors?	6.4%	8.4%	34.7%	50.6%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 92.5% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that all the accounts/stories of the Bible are true. There are 98.4% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that all of the books of the Bible are true and 81.4% who either *Disagree* or *Totally Disagree* that other "holy" books are inspired. There are 92.6% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that the Bible is trustworthy in all matters and 85.3% who either *Disagree* or *Totally Disagree* that the Bible contains errors.

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Null Hypothesis 1

H01: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Table 71
Null Hypothesis 1:ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	563.356	1	563.356	69.978	.000[b]
Residual	4025.235	500	8.050		
Total	4588.592	501			

a. Dependent Variable: Inerrancy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Deity of Jesus Christ

The null hypothesis was rejected because the significance level was set at $p < .05$ and the results after the analysis of variance test (ANOVA) produced a statistical significance level of .000. There is a significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Question 2

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the

Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

Table 72
Affirmation of the Trinity

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q12) Do you feel the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible?	69.1%	23.9%	3.2%	3.8%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 93.0% either

Totally Agree or *Agree* that the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible.

Null Hypothesis 2

H02: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Table 73
Null Hypothesis 2:ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	96.241	1	96.241	10.712	.001[b]
Residual	4492.351	500	8.985		
Total	4588.592	501			

a. Dependent Variable: Inerrancy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Trinity

The null hypothesis was rejected because the significance level was set at $p < .05$ and the results after the ANOVA test produced a statistical significance level of .001. There is a significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of the Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Question 3

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of

Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

Table 74
Affirmation of the resurrection of Jesus

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q17) Do you feel Jesus died by crucifixion on a cross?	82.7%	15.9%	0.4%	1.0%
(Q18) Do you feel Jesus' dead body was laid in a Tomb?	80.7%	18.9%	0.0%	0.4%
(Q19) Do you feel there were eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after his resurrection?	76.9%	19.9%	1.4%	0.8%
(Q20) Do you feel Jesus arose from the dead after three days in the grave?	78.3%	16.9%	2.6%	1.8%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 98.6% either

Totally Agree or *Agree* that the Jesus died by crucifixion and 99.6% either *Totally Agree*

or *Agree* that Jesus' dead body was laid in a tomb. There are 96.8% who either *Totally*

Agree or *Agree* that there were eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after His resurrection, and

95.2% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Jesus arose from the dead after three days

in the grave. (See Table 70 for results on inerrancy.)

Null Hypothesis 3

HO3: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists'

affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Table 75
Null Hypothesis 3:ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	681.389	1	681.389	87.196	.000[b]
Residual	3907.203	500	7.814		
Total	4588.592	501			

a. Dependent Variable: Inerrancy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Resurrection/Death

The null hypothesis was rejected because the significance level was set at $p < .05$

and the results after the ANOVA test produced a statistical significance level of .000.

There is a significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the

resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Question 4

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in

the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

Table 76
Affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q24) Do you feel God, through Moses, changed the Nile River into blood?	66.9%	25.9%	3.8%	3.4%
(Q25) Do you feel Jonah was inside of a whale/fish for three days?	69.9%	23.7%	4.6%	1.8%
(Q26) Do you feel Daniel was thrown into a pit with lions and was not hurt?	70.3%	24.1%	3.4%	2.2%
(Q27) Do you feel David killed a giant named Goliath?	71.9%	23.7%	2.8%	1.6%
(Q28) Do you feel Moses crossed the Red Sea and Israel walked on dry ground?	67.1%	25.7%	4.8%	2.2%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 92.8% either

Totally Agree or *Agree* that God through Moses changed the Nile River into blood and

93.6% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Jonah was inside of a fish/whale for three days.

There are 94.4% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Daniel was thrown in a pit with

lions and was not hurt, and 92.8% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Israel walked

on dry ground after Moses parted the Red Sea. (See Table 70 for results on inerrancy.)

Null Hypothesis 4

H04: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists'

affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Table 77
Null Hypothesis 4:ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1158.285	1	1158.285	168.831	.000[b]
Residual	3430.306	500	6.861		
Total	4588.592	501			

a. Dependent Variable: Inerrancy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Miracles

The null hypothesis was rejected because the significance level was set at p < .05

and the results after the ANOVA test produced a statistical significance level of .000.

There is a significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the

miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Question 5

RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events

reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

Table 78

Affirmation of the supernatural events reported in Genesis

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q31) Do you feel the earth is less than 12,000 years old?	29.1%	19.1%	33.9%	17.7%
(Q32) Do you feel Adam and Eve were created about 12,000 years ago or less?	39.0%	35.9%	13.1%	12.0%
(Q33) Do you feel God created the earth in six literal 24-hour days?	61.8%	28.9%	9.0%	0.4%
(Q34) Do you feel Adam and Eve were real people?	73.1%	24.5%	0.6%	1.8%
(Q35) Do you feel dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago?	34.3%	27.9%	25.7%	12.2%
(Q36) Do you feel dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve??	26.3%	18.7%	40.8%	14.1%
(Q37) Do you feel evolution is the process that God used to create humans?	13.9%	4.0%	31.7%	50.2%
(Q38) Do you feel God use evolution to change one kind of animal to another kind?	16.3%	9.0%	36.3%	38.4%

(Q39) Do you feel dinosaurs died out before there were people on the planet?	24.1%	23.5%	32.1%	20.3%
(Q40) Do you feel humans evolved from ape-like creatures?	13.9%	1.2%	28.5%	56.4%
(Q41) Do you feel because of science, the earth is millions/billions of years old?	16.3%	25.5%	38.2%	19.7%
(Q44) Do you feel there was a global flood during the days of Noah?	63.5%	28.9%	3.6%	3.8%
(Q45) Do you feel Noah and his family/the only humans to survive the flood?	62.5%	31.7%	3.8%	1.6%
(Q46) Do you feel Noah's flood was a local flood?	5.0%	4.2%	40.2%	50.4%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 51.6% either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that believe the earth is less than 12,000 years old, 74.9% *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Adam and Eve were created about 12,000 years ago or less, and 90.6% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that God created the earth in six literal 24-hour days. There are 97.6% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that Adam and Eve were real people, 62.2% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago, and 54.9% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve. There are 81.9% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that evolution is the process that God used to create humans, 74.7% who either *Disagree* or

Totally disagree that God used evolution to change one kind of animal to another kind of animal, and 52.4% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that dinosaurs died before there were people on the planet. There are 84.9% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that humans evolved from ape-like creatures, 57.9% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that because of scientific evidence that the earth is millions/billions years old, and 92.4% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that there was a global flood during the days of Noah. There are 94.2% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that believe only Noah and his family survived the flood and 90.6% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that Noah's flood was a local flood.

Null Hypothesis 5

H05: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Table 79
Null Hypothesis 5:ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	490.957	1	490.957	59.907	.000[b]
Residual	4097.634	500	8.195		
Total	4588.592	501			

a. Dependent Variable: Inerrancy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Genesis

The null hypothesis was rejected because the significance level was set at $p < .05$ and the results after the ANOVA test produced a statistical significance level of .000.

There is a significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Question 6

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

Table 80
Affirmation of the authority of the Bible in their personal lives

	Totally Agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
(Q13) Do you feel the only way to God is through Jesus?	73.9%	24.1%	1.4%	0.6%
(Q23) Do you feel Jesus is coming back?	80.5%	18.9%	0.4%	0.2%
(Q49) Do you feel Bible is the final authority in my life when I make decisions?	54.4%	36.3%	7.2%	2.2%
(Q50) Do you feel homosexual marriage is a biblically acceptable lifestyle?	4.2%	4.0%	27.9%	63.9%
(Q53) Do you feel abortion is acceptable?	4.8 %	4.8 %	36.7 %	53.8 %
(Q57) Do you feel living with your boy/girlfriend before marriage is acceptable?	5.2%	19.7%	39.2%	35.7%
(Q58) Do you feel Christian marrying a non-Christian is acceptable to the Bible?	10.8%	26.1%	41.2%	21.9%
(Q59) Do you feel husband is the head of the household?	42.0%	41.2%	11.2%	5.0%
(Q62) Do you feel Bible permits women to be pastors just like men?	22.7 %	21.9%	37.3 %	17.7 %

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(Q54) Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?	Yes	No	Idk
	17.9%	51.8%	20.7%

Of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists church members surveyed 98.0% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that the only way to God is through Jesus, 99.4% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that believe Jesus is coming back, and 90.6% either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that the Bible is the final authority to make decisions. There are 91.8% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that homosexual marriage is a biblically acceptable lifestyle, 90.4% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that abortion is acceptable and when asked "Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?" 51.8% said "no". There are 74.9% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that living with a boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable and 63.1% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that a Christian marrying a non-Christian is acceptable to the Bible. There are 83.3% who either *Totally Agree* or *Agree* that a husband is the head of the household, and 55.0% who either *Disagree* or *Totally disagree* that the Bible permits women to be pastors just like men. (See Table 70 for results on inerrancy.)

Null Hypothesis 6

HO6: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Table 81
ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	837.796	1	837.796	111.682	.000[b]
Residual	3750.796	500	7.502		
Total	4588.592	501			

a. Dependent Variable: Inerrancy
b. Predictors: (Constant), Personal lives

The null hypothesis was rejected because the significance level was set at $p < .05$ and the results after the ANOVA test produced a statistical significance level of .000. There is a significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Summary of Research Questions

The purpose of this current study sought was to ascertain the degree to which, if any, Florida Southern Baptists affirm the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. There were six research questions that were designed to collect and analyze the data to answer the purpose of this study. The results showed the following based upon combining the categories of *Totally Agree* and *Agree* together or *Disagree* and *Totally Disagree* together.

RQ1

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_01: *There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.*

The results revealed 98.2% believe Jesus was born of a virgin, 80.3% believe Jesus is God, and 93.2% believe Jesus was a man and fully God. Regarding inerrancy results revealed 92.5% believe all the accounts/stories of the Bible are true, 98.4% believe all of the books of the Bible are true, 81.4% do not believe other holy books are inspired, 92.6% believe the Bible is trustworthy in all matters, and 85.3% do not believe that the Bible contains errors. The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ2

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_02: *There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.*

The results revealed 93.0% believe the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.001).

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RQ3

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_o3: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed 98.6% believe Jesus died by crucifixion, 99.6% believe Jesus' dead body was laid in a tomb, 96.8% believe there were eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after His resurrection, and 95.2% believe Jesus arose from the dead after three days in the grave. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ4

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_o4: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed 92.8% believe God through Moses, changed the Nile river into blood, 93.6% believe Jonah was inside of a fish/whale for three days, 94.4% believe Daniel was thrown in a pit with lions and was not hurt, and 92.8% believe Israel walked on dry ground after Moses parted the Red sea. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ5

RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_05: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed 51.6% do not believe the earth is less than 12,000 years old, 74.9% believe Adam and Eve were created about 12,000 years ago or less, 90.6% believe God created the earth in six literal 24-hour days, 97.6% believe Adam and Eve were real people, 62.2% believe dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago, 55% do not believe dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve, 81.9% do not believe evolution is the process that God used to create humans, 74.7% do not believe God used evolution to change one kind of animal to another kind of animal, 52.4% do not believe dinosaurs died before there were people on the planet, 84.9% do not believe humans evolved from ape-like creatures, 58.0% do not believe because of scientific evidence that the earth is millions/billions years old, 92.4% believe there was a global flood during the days of Noah, 94.2% believe only Noah and his family survived the flood, and 90.6% do not believe Noah's flood was a local flood. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ6

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_o6: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed 98.0% believe the only way to God is through Jesus. There are 99.4% who believe Jesus is coming back and 90.6% who believe the Bible is the final authority to make decisions. There are 91.8% who do not believe homosexual marriage is a biblically acceptable lifestyle and 90.4% who do not believe abortion is acceptable. When asked "Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?" 51.8% said "no", 74.9% do not believe living with a boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable, 63.1% do not believe a Christian marrying a non-Christian is acceptable to the Bible, 83.3% believe a husband is the head of the household, and 55.0% do not believe the Bible permits women to be pastors just like men. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypotheses were rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Introduction

The purpose of gathering an expert panel was to "generate a rather rich and comprehensive picture" of the researched topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, pp. 109–110). Because the type of mixed-method research implemented was the *Sequential Explanatory Strategy*, quantitative research was implemented first with the BIT and then followed by qualitative research of the expert panel. Quantitative research "is used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena" while qualitative research is "used to answer questions about the complex nature of the phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004, p. 94). Thus, the expert panel provided interpretative guidance to the results of the responses from BIT survey.

The expert panel met November 7, 2013 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. There were nine participants, two audio/video professionals, and one moderator (the researcher). The expert panel was professionally recorded for 90 minutes (video and audio), professionally transcribed into a 21-page document, and then finally analyzed by using NVivo – leading qualitative research software.

Composition of the Expert Panel

The ministerial and academic background of the expert panel that met November 7, 2013 was composed of pastors, theologians, and lay leaders. There were a total of nine men present. All were ordained, eight of them were currently pastors or lay leaders within a Florida Southern Baptist church, and one had been actively serving within a Florida Southern Baptist church until one year ago.

Academically, two had earned a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Biblical and Theological studies, one earned his Doctor of Ministry, two were Ph.D. candidates (ABD) in the area of Religion and Biblical Studies, and all nine had earned a master's degree from either a Southern Baptist seminary or from a seminary of similar faith. Five of them either currently teach or within the last year have taught at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Professionally, there were six who had over 25 years of pastoral experience, most as pastors within the state of Florida and within a Florida Southern Baptist church. Within the group there were senior and associate pastors. Of the associate pastors, there were associates in music, education, and youth. Collectively there was over 200 years of ministerial experience within the group. Their background, credentials, and ministry experience allowed them to speak to the results of the BIT.

Prior to the expert panel meeting, the researcher made individual requests to each panel member. Initially 13 requests were made, two declined and 11 accepted. Two days before November 7, 2013 two members informed the researcher that due to sickness they would be unable to attend. Nine members participated in the panel.

Each panel member was sent, one week in advance, an executive summary. The executive summary listed a brief history of Southern Baptists and the doctrine of inerrancy. Included in the executive summary was the rationale for selecting 502 Florida Southern Baptists to complete the BIT survey, the purpose of the research, the eight questions to be discussed, summary of the quantitative results from BIT, and highlights from BIT. Listed below were the highlights from the BIT that the researcher believed would adequately describe the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy.

Highlights from the Biblical Inerrancy Test

- 92.5% believe the accounts of the Bible are true (Q1).

- 98.4% believe all the books of the Bible are true (Q2).

- 92.6% believe the Bible is true and trustworthy in all matters (Q4).

- 85.3% believe the Bible did not contain errors (Q7).

- 90.6 believe the Bible is the final authority in one's life when making decisions (Q49).

- 19.8% did not believe that Jesus is God (Q11).

- 51.6% did not believe the earth was less than 12,000 years old (Q31).

- 62.2% believe dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago (Q35).

- 17.9% believe evolution is the process that God used to create humans (Q37).

- 15.1% believed humans evolved from ape-like creatures (Q40).

- 90.4% believe abortion is not acceptable (Q53); however,

- 17.9% said 'yes' when asked "Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?"

- 20.7% said 'I don't know' when asked "Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?" (Q54).

- 24.9% believe living with one's boy/girlfriend is acceptable (Q57).

- 36.9% believe a Christian marrying a non-Christian was acceptable to the Bible (Q59).

- 44.6% believe the Bible permits women to be pastors just like men (Q62).

- 26.7% attend church 2xs/month or less (Q64).

- 51.6% read their Bible 1x/week or less (Q65).

Questions for the Expert Panel

Subsequent to participating in the expert panel on November 7, 2013 the researcher asked each member of the panel to come prepared to discuss the subsequent questions based upon the highlights of the BIT. The researcher believed that the following questions would provide ample opportunity for the expert panel to summarize in a commentary form the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy.

1. 19.8% of FSB disagreed that Jesus is God (Q11); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

2. 51.6% of FSB did not believe that earth is less than 12,000 (Q31); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

3. 17.9% of FSB believed that evolution was the process that God used to create humans (Q37); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

4. 15.1% of FSB believed that humans evolved from ape-like creatures (Q40); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

5. 18% of FSB believed there was a time when abortion is acceptable (Q54); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

6. 24.9% of FSB believed living with one's boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable (Q57); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

7. 46.6% of FSB believed that the Bible permits a woman to be a pastor just like a man (Q62); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

8. To what degree would you say Florida Southern Baptists (FSB) affirm the doctrine of inerrancy? Scale of 1 to 10. 10 = Maximum or 1 = Minimum.

The purpose of asking each member of the expert panel to answer these questions was to determine if the expert panel believed the doctrine of inerrancy was being eroded based upon the highlighted results, even though over 90% of FSB affirmed a belief in the doctrine of inerrancy.

Results of the Expert Panel

The video and audio recording of the expert panel was professionally transcribed into a word processing document of approximately 21-pages in length (Appendix D). Subsequently, the researcher reviewed the transcription for significant omissions and then downloaded the document into the software NVivo. "NVivo is software that supports qualitative and mixed-methods research. It lets [the researcher] collect, organize and analyze content from interviews, focus group discussions, [and] surveys" ("QSR International," n.d.). This is leading software to analyze qualitative data such as expert panel interviews.

The results of the expert panel were analyzed for themes and then compiled based upon the order of the questions. There were a total of eight questions asked, although some of the questions were combined, and will be noted in the analysis.

Opening comments were made by the moderator to highlight that FSB expressed the following responses: 92.5% believe the accounts of the Bible are true (Q1), 98.4% believe all the books of the Bible are true (Q2), 92.6% believe the Bible is true and trustworthy in all matters (Q4), 85.3% believe the Bible did not contain errors (Q7), and 90.6% believe the Bible is the final authority in one's life when making decisions (Q49).

The moderator concluded that these results seemed to reveal that FSB affirmed a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible while simultaneously some of the other highlights seemed to indicate that a percentage of FSB had beliefs that could be interpreted in contrary to their belief in the doctrine of inerrancy. The subsequent questions were presented and the responses were listed, however, the respondents remained anonymous, as agreed upon for purpose of confidentiality (Appendix E).

Question #1: 19.8% of FSB disagreed that Jesus is God (Q11); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

When asked to respond to this question there was concern of the initial percentage, but respondent #8 expressed a sentiment that others seemed to embrace, "the thing I noted was phrasing of the question 14 [which] asked the question was Jesus a man and fully God and it was 7% roughly disagreed with that, so it was a dramatically lower number. There may have been some confusion regarding the question. So I think the number is lower probably than that 19.8%." Respondent #2 concurred and added, "I think to be alarmed by the 19.8% is to misread the full survey. In our parlance, we don't

say Jesus is God. Most of the time, we say Jesus is the son of God. So the verbiage in this statement is different than the way people are used to hearing the statement. So I'm not sure that disagreeing with the statement Jesus is God is tantamount to saying we don't believe Jesus is deity and I think that question 14 - was Jesus a man and fully God - I think clarifies what the genuine perspective is of Florida Baptists." Respondent #1 wondered, "My first question was do they think this is saying that Jesus is God the Father, because in Christendom we don't distinguish well between God and God the Father." Respondent #7 stated his concern for Southern Baptists in general, "It was definitely disturbing in that regard because in our world today with all the different religions out there, you think, ok, Southern Baptists, this should be something they should understand and know." Respondent #9 clarified "I'll say this, [it is logical] to hold to the doctrine of inerrancy and think that the Bible teaches Jesus is not God. In other word, they could have a hermeneutical problem. So they may have a very high view of scripture, they're just really bad exegesis. So that's possible, but probably not likely in most of that 19.8%." Respondent #3, #5, and #6 all concluded that the church needs to teach more doctrine and respondent #4 indicated, "We may be dealing with more lost church members than we would like to admit." As to the doctrine of inerrancy being eroded by this belief that Jesus is not God, there was a general consensus that the true number of FBS who denied the deity of Jesus was closer to 7%, as revealed in question 14 of the BIT.

Question #2: 51.6% of FSB did not believe that earth is less than 12,000(Q31); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

The expert panel was divided into three groups regarding the age of the earth. The first group affirmed that the earth was no more than 12,000 years old and belief in an older earth erodes the doctrine of inerrancy. Respondent #1 expressed "I know some lovely wonderful people who do not affirm that the earth is 12,000 years old, but would hold a high view of inerrancy. I disagree with them heartily. I can't say they're not accepting the text, just that they're in my opinion adding to it. Which may be a question of inerrancy, [that is] envisioning things that I don't really see there, big old gaps." Respondent #3 added, "You're buying into evolution and then trying to make scriptures fit with so-called science. You need to start with the scriptures and thoroughly interpret them. Then science must fit the scripture. True science will fit the scriptures in young earth." Respondent #6 remarked "I'm a young-earther. I think the data is very pristine and powerful. The reason why that other 50% exists is because the opposition teaching the religion of atheism which mandates evolution requires these long period of times. We do not have evidence of long periods of time. We have presumptions of such things."

The second group believed one could believe in an older earth and affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Respondent #8 stated, "William Dembski believes [past Professor of Religion at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary] the universe is billions of years old and Paige Patterson [president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary], [said] he fell within the bounds of the Baptist faith and message so I'm gonna go with Paige and say it has no bearing on inerrancy of scripture." Respondent #9 added, "I will say for the record, I am not a young earth creationist. And I'm not pushed away from

young earth creationists because of the science. I'm not a science guy. I have a Ph.D. in Old and New Testament. I'm convinced because of my reading of Genesis 1 and 2. I give genre a great amount of weight. I look at ancient cosmology language and it makes sense to me when put into Mesopotamian language." Respondent #2 summarized, "I don't think there's any correlation between belief in age of earth and the doctrine of inerrancy. The age of the earth is not an essential tenant of theology anywhere. Apparently, it wasn't considered too important for the Baptist Faith and Message [2000] because it's not there either."

The third group believed the Bible taught a young earth, but that the doctrine of inerrancy was not being eroded by an older earth belief. Respondent #4 remarked, "I do not believe it affects the doctrine of inerrancy. I do not believe the person who answered that question is looking himself at scripture whether it's infallible or the full Word of God. I do believe a young earth is there in book of Genesis. I also believe that if you go with the old earth, you have people dying before sin. Scripture teaches us that death came as a result of sin. Respondent #5 elaborated, "I wouldn't say it's an inerrant type issue. I think there are some godly guys that are "gappers" also. I'd read it as Adam to Abraham as 2000 [years] and I'd read it from Abraham another 4000 [years], I'd still see it as some age as a young earth. Here's the issue to me. To me it's a trust issue. Trusting what God says." Respondent #7 explained, "If you step through the chronology of the Bible, unless you put gaps in there somewhere you can come up with about 6000 years or so. To me it's pretty straightforward if the take the Word of God literally, so I think it's problematic. The question itself - look at it one way, say yes. Look at it another way,

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say no. The doctrine of inerrancy is the doctrine of inerrancy. There's lot of questions about Genesis, all the way down to the flood."

Question #3: 17.9% of FSB believed that evolution was the process that God used to create humans (Q37); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

Question #4: 15.1% of FSB believed that humans evolved from ape-like creatures (Q40); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

Both of these questions were combined and the panel was encouraged to respond to each question either individually or collectively. Although there is a distinction between the topics of each question, the researcher believed there was not a significant enough difference in the percentages to warrant additional time for each question. Collectively the responses seemed to overlap enough that both questions could be combined.

Most of expert panel concluded that the belief that God used the evolutionary process to create humans did begin to erode the doctrine of inerrancy. Respondent #9 stated, "There are plenty of positions where a person can hold to an old earth and reject evolution as a process. They're related but not the same question." Respondent #8 added, "I would say without a doubt that begins to undermine clearly the inerrancy of scripture." He expounded "You've got pastors teaching that. You sit under the authority of a pastor and he teaches an evolutionary process, people are going to believe that." Respondent #6 warned against interjecting "science" that undermined the scriptures and illustrated, "I think it's an error to say I believe all the scriptures, maybe not the Jonah stuff. And as soon as we let the Jonah stuff get that level of qualification, then we might say well, the resurrection too." Respondent #5 read from Genesis 1:26ff and concluded, "Now that's as clear as can be that there's no animal that's an equal to God's creation of man. But

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there's a great sensitivity in culture to save any minnow or fish over an unborn child and everything else you can think of. It's because of that permeation that is eroding and definitely eroding an inerrancy aspect." Respondent #3 pronounced "Evolution was formed as a belief system, how can we explain the origins of humanity without introducing God into the picture? It is inconsistent for Christians to believe in evolution and to believe in scriptures. The scriptures are clear on that." The only panel member to conclude that the belief that God used the evolutionary process to create humans did not begin to erode the doctrine of inerrancy was respondent #4. He stated, "I do believe there's a compartmentalization in the minds of people that take surveys like this and I just believe they've heard so much of the world's philosophy and the world's edification, that when we preach, including this pastor here. I do not think it diminishes the doctrine of inerrancy."

Question #5: 18.0% of FSB believed there was a time when abortion is acceptable (Q54); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

Question #6: 24.9% of FSB believed living with one's boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable (Q57); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

Due to time restraints, the panel was asked to comment on both questions. Since both questions touched upon the issue of authority of the Bible in the daily lives of FSB, they were combined as well. The respondents seemed to be collectively against abortion personally, as expressed by respondent #5. He summarized "We're gonna start with the assumption that we are not for abortion. Psalm 130 for example, you knitted me together in my mother's womb, I'll praise you because I am remarkably wonderfully made." They were also against a boyfriend or girlfriend living together before marriage, as expressed

by respondent #2. He stated, "I believe it's inappropriate for a boy and girl to live together before marriage. It is a shame that we have this trend that's so out of line with the scriptures."

Some of the panel members seemed to look for ways to justify the 18.0% who stated that abortion was acceptable. Respondent #4 exclaimed, "I can see the person taking a survey and I could be one that would think about the endangering of the mother with the child. And so I could see where 18.0% would say that is acceptable." Respondent #3 added, "Probably if we knew this 18.0% they're probably talking about situations that are difficult where the mother is warned that her life is in danger." One panel member, respondent #8 did not believe inerrancy was being eroded. He stated clearly, "Answer to question 5 is no. Up through 1991, we had an exception in Southern Baptist resolutions regarding abortion for health of a woman." Another panel member, respondent #6 affirmed his belief in the immorality of abortion and the erosion of inerrancy. He exclaimed, "I am staunchly opposed to abortion. I have never been raped. I have never been impregnated by some murderer's baby. I don't know what that feels like. But I would like to say that even if I were in that situation, I would respect man made in the image of God and that baby is made in the image of God. I don't ever want to be the type of person that would take the life of the image of God period because that's the truth. The overwhelming vast majority of people who make the decision about abortion make them entirely on one subject and its morality."

Respondent #2 stated, "It's so alarming one out of four [believe it is acceptable to live] with the boyfriend/girlfriend. I wonder if perhaps some of the reason for this thinking is you interview a boomer and their daughter is living with someone and they're

just longing to live at peace with what their daughter has chosen to do. Respondent #8 wondered as pastors and stated, "We had preached so clearly the eternal security of the believer and that God forgives sin, [and that] God will forgive me for [any] sin [of living with my boyfriend and girlfriend]", that there are no real consequences. Respondent #4 reiterated, "It's shocking to me how many parents know their children are living [this way] and it does not break fellowship nor is there any admonition going on." Respondent #6 highlighted, "Biblical sexuality is absolutely the winner in every contest."

Questions 7: 46.6% of FSB believed that the Bible permits a woman to be a pastor just like a man (Q62); does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy? If so, how?

The moderator allowed an open forum for all panels members to comment on this question rather than asking each participant to respond individually and in an order of sequence. Two members responded to this question. Respondent #3 stated, "They'll have a problem with 1 Timothy 3. A pastor has to be the husband of one wife. So how does a woman become the husband of one wife? That's a problem."

A more fully developed response came from respondent #6. He expounded, "But I'm fascinated that half of people would say, sure, that's ok, what's wrong with having a woman pastor? We would say there's nothing wrong with that, they want to serve God, let's go do that. But in same sense, my picture of this is in the Old Testament. What's wrong with having a non-Levite make a sacrifice? Everything! Penalty- death! And it's because the picture is owned by God. And it comes back to this inerrancy and authority. It's not our picture." He added, "It's like saying we're gonna hire some Buddhists, they make pretty good Christian pastors. They don't believe, but they're effective. Doesn't

matter if it works, doesn't matter what the numbers are, I think it ultimately matters what the Book says."

Question 8: To what degree would you say Florida Southern Baptists (FSB) affirm the doctrine of inerrancy? Scale of 1 to 10. 10 = Maximum or 1 = Minimum.

The moderator asked the final question. The purpose of this question was to elicit a numerical value from each panel member on the degree to which each panel member believe the 500 FSB affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Ten would equal full affirmation while one would equal almost no affirmation.

Respondent#1: "On an intellectual level, I think the Southern Baptists interviewed hold a high view of inerrancy. On a level of practice... I'm thinking more like 6 or 5."

Responden#2: "I'd be optimistic and give it a 9. I would think the primary issue isn't their view of the scripture but their ability to handle or understand it or their knowledge of it."

Respondent#3: "Theoretically 10 and practically 6."

Respondent#4: "I would also give a theoretical and realistic. I would also add to that 98% I believe really do believe, so I would say about 9.78, but I would also say there's some ignorance in what inerrancy actually means by their very lifestyles so I'm probably a 9.8 and a 7."

Respondent#5: "I felt that however you live your life practically is what you really believe. So I went straight to question 4, is the Bible true and trustworthy in all matters and I saw 60% and I gave them a 6."

Respondent#6: "I think they think they're at 9. 90% believe these things, say they believe them, but put into practical situation of the heart or situational ethics, they function at a 5 to 6."

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Respondent#7: "Their answers to those direct questions at the top of the page, they're 8.5, 9.5. Then we got down to the practical, the cultural things where it gets down to a 5 or 6."

Respondent#8: "I'd probably put it up at around an 8 or 9. I think there's a lot of lack of education. So if they were to be educated and the real question becomes are those people even Christians let alone Southern Baptists...so anyway, I think what I'm gonna say is an 8."

Respondent#9: "I would give the same reasons for all the same logic there, same explanation. And based on this third point on page four, 85.3% believe the Bible did not contain errors, I'd give it an 8.5"

Summary of the Expert Panel

An expert panel met November 7, 2013 to comment on eight questions the researcher believed highlighted the results of the BIT survey of 502 Florida Southern Baptists. The BIT sought to understand the degree to which FSB affirmed the inerrancy of the Bible. This expert panel of pastors and academicians was brought together to express their findings of the highlighted results.

Question #1: 19.8% of FSB disagreed that Jesus is God (Q11).

As to the doctrine of inerrancy being eroded by this belief that Jesus is not God, there was a general consensus that the true number of FBS who denied the deity of Jesus was closer to 7%, as revealed in question 14 of the BIT.

Question #2: 51.6% of FSB did not believe that earth is less than 12,000 (Q31).

The expert panel was divided into three groups regarding the age of the earth. The first group affirmed that the earth was no more than 12,000 years old and belief in an

older earth erodes the doctrine of inerrancy. The second group believed one could believe in an older earth and affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The third group believed the Bible taught a young earth, but that the doctrine of inerrancy was not being eroded by an older earth belief.

Question #3: 17.9% of FSB believed that evolution was the process that God used to create humans (Q37).

Question #4: 15.1% of FSB believed that humans evolved from ape-like creatures (Q40).

Most of expert panel concluded that the belief that God used the evolutionary process to create humans erodes the doctrine of inerrancy. Only one panel member concluded that the belief that God used the evolutionary process to create humans did not erode the doctrine of inerrancy.

Question #5: 18% of FSB believed there was a time when abortion is acceptable (Q54).

Question #6: 24.9% of FSB believed living with one's boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable (Q57).

The respondents seemed to be collectively against abortion personally. Yet they were not unanimous that this belief eroded the doctrine of inerrancy. Some of the panel members seemed to look for ways to justify the response to abortion being acceptable by 18% of FSB and one stated that until 1991, there was an exception clause for the life of the mother in Southern Baptist resolutions. With regard to questions #6 the panel seemed more united that this belief did erode the belief in the doctrine of inerrancy, although they did not express it clearly.

Questions 7: 46.6% of FSB believed that the Bible permits a woman to be a pastor just like a man (Q62).

Due to time restraints, two of the nine members commented on this question and affirmed that the Bible does not permit women to function in the role of pastor. God's picture of how His church is to function is challenged, which in effect is challenging the authority and inerrancy of the Bible.

Question 8: To what degree would you say Florida Southern Baptists (FSB) affirm the doctrine of inerrancy? Scale of 1 to 10. 10 = Maximum or 1 = Minimum.

The moderator asked the final question to elicit a numerical value from each panel member on the degree to which each panel member believe the 500 FSB affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Respondent #1: intellectually high view and practically 5.0 or 6.0 Respondent #2: intellectually 9.0 and practically 9.0. Respondent #3: intellectually 10 and practically 6.0. Respondent #4: intellectually 9.8 and practically 7.0. Respondent #5: intellectually 6.0 and practically 6.0. Respondent #6: intellectually 9.0 and practically 5.5. Respondent #7: intellectually 9.0 and practically 5.5. Respondent #8: intellectually 8.0 and practically 8.0. Respondent #9: intellectually 8.5 and practically 8.5. The mean score was intellectually 8.3 and practically 6.8. The median score was intellectually 9.0 and practically 6.0.

CHAPTER SIX

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The present research study examined the degree to which, if any, Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The research investigated the relationship that exists between FSB affirmations in the doctrine of inerrancy, the deity of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the Trinity, resurrection of Jesus Christ, miracles reported in the Bible, supernatural events reported in Genesis, and their affirmation of the authority of the Bible in their personal lives. The primary goal was assist the leadership within Southern Baptist Convention to ascertain if the general membership within the SBC did, in fact, affirm the doctrine of inerrancy and to what degree. As a core doctrinal position with the SBC, to know if this doctrine is being affirmed with the general membership should assist church, seminary, and university leadership. This present research should aid senior pastors, Christian education pastors, Sunday school teachers, and professors within Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries to know if additional education instruction is necessary.

In this final chapter, the researcher has synthesized the significant results from the BIT and has carefully chosen those highlights that reflect potential educational implications for the church and ministry settings. Summary of the findings, educational implications, and recommendations are offered.

Summary

One of the historical positions of Southern Baptists, as stated by Bush and Nettles in their book The Baptists and the Bible, is the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. They explored the history of Southern Baptists' belief of the authority, inspiration, and infallibility of the Bible and concluded that the Bible is and also has been the highest authority for Southern Baptists (1999, p. 355). Through the 1980s and 1990s, the SBC was in the midst of a political struggle over the Bible. Within the denomination were two groups – conservatives and moderates (Williams, 2000, p. 66). In 1979, led by Paige Patterson and Judge Paul Pressler, the conservatives sought to elect Southern Baptist presidents who would affirm inerrancy of the Bible (James, 1986, p. 69). In 2000, the BFM 2000 was craft and approved by the SBC. Within the area of scripture the phrase *"therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy and all Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation"* (Wooddell, 2007, sec. 467) was added and the phrase *"the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ"* (2007, sec. 467) was removed. The SBC had attempted to affirm in more precise language the inerrancy of the Bible through the BFM 2000.

The extant literature revealed a gap in the research. That is, the general membership within the SBC had not been surveyed to determine the degree to which, if any, they affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The leadership and delegates within the SBC had affirmed the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, but what was not known was if the general membership affirmed this belief and to what degree. Due to the size of the general population of the Southern Baptist Convention and limited resources a sample

population within the Southern Baptist membership was selected. This was the Florida Southern Baptists.

This researcher formulated the BIT and six research questions to ascertain to what degree, if any, Florida Southern Baptists affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the collections and analysis of the data for the current research study:

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$1: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$2: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$3: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0$4: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

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RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_05: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_06: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Research Methodology

Research was conducted through the strategy of mixed-methods. Mixed-methods as an approach has emerged as a new paradigm from the social science wars that "contains elements of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, p. 9). The type of mixed method research that was implemented was the *Sequential Explanatory Strategy. Sequential Explanatory Strategy* "is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data in the first phase of research followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results" (Creswell, 2009, p. 209). The result will be that qualitative data "can be used to shed light on the quantitative data" and "generate a rather rich and comprehensive picture" of the researched topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, pp. 109–110).

The population studied was adults who were members of a Florida Southern

Baptist church. The population of FSB membership is 1,009,080 (Florida Baptist

Convention, 2013). Leedy and Ormod recommend a sample size of 400 for populations

beyond 5,000 (2004, p. 207). A sample size of 500 was selected based upon the

recommendation of expert panel A.

American's Research Group, Limited, Inc. gathered the data of FSB members

through a methodology that representatively samples the top twenty metropolitan areas in

Florida through random calling (Appendix A). This form of sampling is called

multistage that is, "when it is impossible or impractical to compile a list of the elements

composing the population" (Creswell, 2009, p. 148).

The survey instrument the Biblical Inerrancy Test (BIT) was formulated through

the approval of an expert panel A. The basis for the BIT originated from Britt Beemer,

the President of ARG. He gave this researcher permission to modify his survey

(Appendix B). The final form of the BIT was 68 questions composed of 21 open-ended

(qualitative) questions and 47 Likert-scale (quantitative) questions (Appendix C).

At the conclusion of the phone surveys there were a total of 502 FSB who

participated. This number of respondents gave the researcher a 95% confidence level that

the results reflect accurately the beliefs of FSB (http://www.surveysystem.com).

The quantitative data was then imported into SPSS for further statistical analysis

and the qualitative data was analyzed by the researcher. Upon completion of the data

entry and categorization, the demographics were revealed and ANOVA test was

performed to evaluate the hypotheses.

Research Conclusions

There were six research questions that were designed to collect and analyze the data to answer the purpose of this study. The results showed the following based upon combining the categories of *Totally Agree* and *Agree* together or *Disagree* and *Totally Disagree* together. (See Appendix F)

RQ1

RQ1: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

$H_0 1$: *There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the deity of Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.*

The results revealed (Q8) 98.2% believe Jesus was born of a virgin (Q11) 80.3% believe Jesus is God and (Q14) 93.2% believe Jesus was a man and fully God. Regarding inerrancy, results revealed (Q1) 92.5% believe all the accounts/stories of the Bible are true, (Q2) 98.4% believe all of the books of the Bible are true, (Q3) 81.4% do not believe other "holy" books are inspired, (Q4) 92.6% believe the Bible is trustworthy in all matters and (Q7) 85.3% do not believe that the Bible contains errors. The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ2

RQ2: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of the

Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_02: *There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists'*

affirmation in the doctrine of Trinity and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed (Q12) 93.0% believe the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in

the Bible. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because,

after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.001).

RQ3

RQ3: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the resurrection of

Jesus Christ and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_03: *There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists'*

affirmation in the resurrection of Jesus and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed (Q17) 98.6% believe Jesus died by crucifixion, (Q18) 99.6%

believe Jesus' dead body was laid in a tomb, (Q19) 96.8% believe there were

eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after His resurrection, and (Q20) 95.2% believe Jesus arose

from the dead after three days in the grave. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null

hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level

was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ4

RQ4: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_o4: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation of the miracles reported in the Bible and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed (Q24) 92.8% believe God through Moses changed the Nile river into blood, (Q25) 93.6% believe Jonah was inside of a fish/whale for three days, (Q26) 94.4% believe Daniel was thrown in a pit with lions and was not hurt, and (Q28) 92.8% believe Israel walked on dry ground after Moses parted the Red sea. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ5

RQ5: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_o5: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists' affirmation in the supernatural events reported in Genesis and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

The results revealed (Q31) 51.6% who do not believe the earth is less than 12,000 years old, and (Q32) 74.9% believe Adam and Eve were created about 12,000 years ago or less. There are (Q33) 90.6% who believe God created the earth in six literal 24-hour days, (Q37) 97.6% believe Adam and Eve were real people, and (Q35) 62.2% believe dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago. There are (Q36) 55% who do not believe dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve, (Q37) 81.9% who do not believe evolution is

the process that God used to create humans, and (Q38) 74.7% who do not believe God

used evolution to change one kind of animal to another kind of animal. There are (Q39)

52.4% who do not believe dinosaurs died before there were people on the planet, (Q40)

84.9% who do not believe humans evolved from ape-like creatures, and (Q41) 58.0%

who do not believe because of scientific evidence that the earth is millions/billions years

old. There are (Q44) 92.4% who believe there was a global flood during the days of

Noah, (Q45) 94.2% who believe only Noah and his family survived the flood, and (Q46)

90.6% who do not believe Noah's flood was a local flood. (See RQ1 for inerrancy

results.) The null hypothesis was rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical

significance level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

RQ6

RQ6: To what degree, if any, do Florida Southern Baptists affirm the authority of Bible

in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible?

H_06: There will be no significant relationship between Florida Southern Baptists'

affirmation in the authority of the Bible in their personal lives and belief in the inerrancy

of the Bible.

The results revealed (Q13) 98.0% believe the only way to God is through Jesus.

There are (Q23) 99.4% who believe Jesus is coming back and (Q49) 90.6% who believe

the Bible is the final authority to make decisions. There are (Q50) 91.8% who do not

believe homosexual marriage is a biblically acceptable lifestyle and (Q53) 90.4% who do

not believe abortion is acceptable. When asked "Is there ever a time when abortion is

acceptable?" (Q54) 51.8% said "no", and (Q57) 74.9% who do not believe living with a

boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable. There are (Q58) 63.1% who do not

believe a Christian marrying a non-Christian is acceptable to the Bible, (Q59) 83.3%

believe a husband is the head of the household, and (Q62) 55.0% who do not believe the

Bible permits women to be pastors just like men. (See RQ1 for inerrancy results.) The

null hypotheses were rejected because, after the ANOVA test, the statistical significance

level was found to be $p < .05$ (.000).

Summary of the Expert Panel

In addition to the analysis of the BIT, an expert panel B met to provide

interpretative guidance to the results of the responses from BIT survey. The expert panel

was professional recorded for 90 minutes (video and audio), professionally transcribed

into a 21-page document (Appendix D), and then finally analyzed by using NVivo. The

expert panel sought to answer eight questions that the researcher believed highlighted the

results of the BIT survey of the 502 Florida Southern Baptists. Their summarized

findings were:

Question #1: 19.8% of FSB disagreed that Jesus is God (Q11).

As to the doctrine of inerrancy being eroded by this belief that Jesus is not God,

there was a general consensus that the true number of FBS who denied the deity of Jesus

was closer to 7%, as revealed in question 14 of the BIT.

Question #2: 51.6% of FSB did not believe that earth is less than 12,000 (Q31).

The expert panel was divided into three groups regarding the age of the earth.

The first group affirmed that the earth was no more than 12,000 years old and belief in an

older earth erodes the doctrine of inerrancy. The second group believed one could

believe in an older earth and affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The third group believed

the Bible taught a young earth, but that the doctrine of inerrancy was being eroded by an older earth belief.

Question #3: 17.9% of FSB believed that evolution was the process that God used to create humans (Q37).

Question #4: 15.1% of FSB believed that humans evolved from ape-like creatures (Q40).

Most of expert panel concluded that the belief that God used the evolutionary process to create humans erodes the doctrine of inerrancy. Only one panel member concluded that the belief that God used the evolutionary process to create humans did not erode the doctrine of inerrancy.

Question #5: 18% of FSB believed there was a time when abortion is acceptable (Q54).

Question #6: 24.9% of FSB believed living with one's boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage is acceptable (Q57).

The respondents seemed to be collectively against abortion personally. Yet they were not unanimous that this belief eroded the doctrine of inerrancy. Some of the panel members seemed to look for ways to justify the response to abortion being acceptable by 18.0% of FSB and one stated that until 1991, there was an exception clause for the life of the mother in Southern Baptist resolutions. With regard to questions #6 the panel seemed more united that this belief did erode the belief in the doctrine of inerrancy, although they did not express it clearly.

Questions 7: 46.6% of FSB believed that the Bible permits a woman to be a pastor just like a man (Q62).

Due to time restraints, two of the nine members commented on this question and affirmed that the Bible does not permit women to function in the role of pastor. God's picture of how His church is to function is challenged, which in effect is challenging the authority and inerrancy of the Bible.

Question 8: To what degree would you say Florida Southern Baptists (FSB) affirm the doctrine of inerrancy? Scale of 1 to 10. 10 = Maximum or 1 = Minimum.

The moderator asked the final question to elicit a numerical value from each panel member on the degree to which each panel member believe the 500 FSB affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. Respondent #1: intellectually high view and practically 5.0 or 6.0 Respondent #2: intellectually 9.0 and practically 9.0. Respondent #3: intellectually 10 and practically 6.0. Respondent #4: intellectually 9.8 and practically 7.0. Respondent #5: intellectually 6.0 and practically 6.0. Respondent #6: intellectually 9.0 and practically 5.5. Respondent #7: intellectually 9.0 and practically 5.5. Respondent #8: intellectually 8.0 and practically 8.0. Respondent #9: intellectually 8.5 and practically 8.5. The mean was intellectually 8.3 and practically 6.8. The median was intellectually 9.0 and practically 6.0.

Educational Implications

Several educational implications can be made from the present research study concerning the degree to which Florida Southern Baptists affirm the doctrine of inerrancy. The review of the literature revealed the historical importance that the Bible has had within the SBC and the resurgence that took place in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s

to reaffirm with clarity the SBC affirmation in the inerrancy of the Bible. The results of BIT within the FSB membership revealed several implications for Christian educators, pastors, professors, and lay leadership.

Significance of Orthodox Doctrine

The apostle Paul, in his second letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2), reminds him, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul wanted Timothy to pass on his apostolic teaching to the next generation. He believed sound doctrine was essential to the advancement of the Christian faith. Paul adds later in his letter (3:16-17), "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The teaching of orthodox doctrine prepares men (and women) to accomplish the good works that God desires for each believer.

The Southern Baptist Convention wanted to ensure that the doctrine of inerrancy was declared with clarity within their convention. Thus, they formulated the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 with an updated understanding of their definition of inerrancy. The data from the BIT survey (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 and Q7) seems to indicate with an overwhelming affirmation that Florida Southern Baptists do affirm this doctrine. Although this research did not ask how often the participants heard sermons on the doctrine of inerrancy, the results seem to reveal a strong commitment of this belief. This would also seem to indicate that SB pastors have diligently preached messages that uphold this doctrine either explicitly or implicitly. The research also seems to indicate that SBC leadership has ensured that their seminaries and colleges are training future

pastors and leaders who will affirm that the Word of God is their final authority. Like Paul, who wanted Timothy to pass on his apostolic teaching to the next generation of leaders, so also is it necessary for present-day leadership to teach correct doctrine to the future leaders to ensure orthodoxy continues. This starts with the belief that the Bible is inerrant. Knowing that SBC wants to elevate the Bible to its proper supreme location should ensure that the SBC will align themselves with the boundaries of orthodoxy.

Importance of Teaching the Bible

The results from the BIT survey also discovered that many of the key teachings from the Bible were also affirmed by the FSB. The deity of Jesus, resurrection of Jesus, many of the supernatural events reported in the Bible, and personal living commands were affirmed to be true. The major reason for this belief was because the participants of the BIT survey commented "Bible said" or "God said." Starting with the belief that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God settles where final authority rests. It begins and ends with the Bible.

The author of Hebrews (4:12) states, " For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Although solidly crafted theological tomes, current-day research, and gifted teachers can lead the student to an orthodox understanding of the Bible, the source ultimately to confirm or deny is the Bible itself.

Paul and Silas went to Berea to teach the Word of God; however, the Bereans, even though they received their teaching with gladness, did examine the Scriptures to confirm if, in fact, what Paul and Silas were teaching was correct. Acts 17:11 records,

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"Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Thus, the Bible is its own authority. Lisle states, "The Bible must be the Word of God because it says it is and if you reject this claim you are reduced to foolishness" (2009, p. 146). As followers of Jesus as the only way, we can know the deity and resurrection of Jesus and recorded supernatural events in the Bible, because the Bible exists. The foundation by which we can know anything is true is the Bible. Doriani states, "Scripture is not sufficient in the sense that it tells us everything we need to know. Farmers and engineers must study the physical and technological world...but we need no God-given revelation beyond the biblical canon" (2009, p. 78). The Bible must be taught as *the* authority in the life of a believer.

Prominence of Christian Education

In the book, *A Theology for Christian Education*, Estep suggests that orthodox teaching could be in crisis if the church does not value Christian education (Estep et al., 2008, pp. 27–28). He argues that Christian education is "the integration of evangelical theology and the social sciences" (p. 29). Within the BIT survey, one of the top responses to explain why FSB members affirmed various orthodox positions was their teaching at home or at church (Q6, Q16, Q30, and Q42). Almost 9% of responses attributed either their training at home or at church. However, the number one response was their Christian belief/faith or belief in what the Bible says (Q6, Q16, Q30, and Q42). One could argue that the training FSB members received at home and at church (via

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Sunday school hours, pastoral messages, and other educational settings) could be the strongest influence upon a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Ephesians 4:11-12 states, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." Also add Deuteronomy 6:7 which states, "You shall teach them [commands of Yahweh] diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." The combination of both of these passages, at minimum, seems to be arguing that God has designed parents and church leadership to educate His people about Him, so in return, that next generation can continue the Christian education training. Christian education is paramount to training the next generation and Florida Southern Baptist churches seem to be moving in the right direction.

Importance of Intentional Teaching

A large percentage of Florida Southern Baptist members affirm the doctrine of inerrancy, but when this belief is dissected the results are concerning. The most shocking data to come from the BIT survey were the views about the supernatural events in Genesis and personal views on moral living. In the 1880s, when Crawford Toy, professor at Southern Baptist Seminary, taught that the early chapters of Genesis (1-11) were historically inaccurate, (1999, p. 211) and Elliot's commentary, published in 1969, questioned the historical accuracy of Genesis (James, 1986, p. 68), Southern Baptists overwhelmingly rejected their views and continued to elevate the Scriptures as infallible. With over half (51.7%) believing that the earth is older than 12,000 years, over one-sixth

(17.9%) believing God used evolution to create humans, almost one-in-seven (15.1)% believing humans evolved from ape-like creatures, this researcher has serious doubts that these types of beliefs, first affirm inerrancy, and second should be accepted within the SBC. This form of thinking would have been rejected within the SBC in 1880s. Yet the results from the BIT (Q33, Q35, Q36, Q39, Q40, Q41,) seem to indicate that there is slippage on the understanding of Genesis 1-11; or worse - the SBC has not taken seriously the foundational aspect of Genesis.

Genesis. Genesis 1-11 is the foundational chapters of the Bible. Our understanding of evil, sin, clothing, death, suffering, languages, and the nation of Israel all originate in these early chapters of Genesis. Although this researcher has argued elsewhere (McGee, 2012) the main purpose of Genesis was not to calculate the age of the earth, there are boundaries to the upper limit of the age of the earth. The Bible provides ample support to counter the current theory that the earth is millions or billions of years old. The greatest concern that this researcher perceives is that a percentage of FBS church members have inadvertently devalued the significance of the gospel message by affirming old earth theology. When old earth theology is permitted to be taught, other scripture, like Romans 8:18-25 do not make sense. If there was already death and destruction prior to Adam, then the groaning of creation will not be redeemed to perfection, rather the state it was in prior to Adam. This interpretation undermines the authority and inerrancy of the Bible.

The supernatural events in Genesis are one-time occurrences. They cannot be known through sense perception. The existing data can be observed, but the *interpretation* of the data is dependent upon the presupposition of the evaluator

(scientist). In a similar manner, the virgin birth or resurrection of Jesus is not testable. If scientific data is allowed to influence the orthodox understanding of these two events (virgin birth and resurrection), then, in time, the belief in both will be dismissed because science cannot prove it. This researcher would suggest that Genesis 1-11 be viewed through the same hermeneutical lens as the virgin birth and resurrection of Jesus. That is, believers affirm a young earth, not because dogma requires, but because Genesis 1-11 teaches it (implied much like the Trinity is implied). A contrary belief could undermine the foundations of the Christian faith.

Genesis Curriculum. This leads the researcher to wonder how often creation apologetics is being taught within the FSB churches. Within the researcher's church, at least once every couple of years a creation conference is promoted, but is that happening in other FSB churches? The need for a Genesis curriculum is essential for the church. Within Genesis 1-11 the church learns about God the origins of the universe, the earth, of life, of death, of sin, of pain, of suffering, of evil, of God's character, and the seed form of a coming Messiah. It is the church's foundation. The doctrine of inerrancy rises or falls upon how one understands Genesis. Therefore, there is a need within the church to intentionally teaching Genesis 1-11 and all its theological implications. Starting with a pre-school and ending with senior adults, a church would be wise to incorporate a creation apologetics curriculum every couple of years. Otherwise, in the end, death does not make sense unless Genesis 1-3 is properly interpreted, salvation does not have the same significance unless Genesis 1-3 is properly interpreted, and the fullness of return of Christ is not realized unless Genesis 1-3 is properly interpreted.

Pastors and leaders of the church sadly do not see the significance of Genesis 1-11. It is her foundation and to dismiss it is done at a great cost. Thus, the researcher would recommend Pastors teach annually Genesis 1-11 and if they do not have a proper understanding of it, then begin with organizations like *Answers in Genesis* or *Institute of Creation Research* to solidify this foundational teaching.

Seminary professors and college faculty should be questioned on their beliefs just like Troy Crawford in the 1880s and should also remove themselves when they no longer can affirm a Biblical understanding of Genesis. This would mean affirming a young earth position on the earth and the universe, six 24-hour creation day week, rejection of evolution, no ape-like creatures formed before humanity, no death and destruction prior to Adam's sin, and an affirmation of a global flood during the days of Noah. Anything less begins to undermine the doctrine of inerrancy and could lead to an erosion of the resurgence's efforts in the 1980s and 1990s.

Immoral Living Erodes Inerrancy

Abortion. The BIT survey revealed that 90% (Q54) affirm the Bible is the final authority when making moral/personal decisions, nonetheless, the underling beliefs revealed a different story for a percentage of FSB. While only 9.6% of FSB believed abortion was acceptable, 38.6% believed there an acceptable time for an abortion or they did not know for sure. Shockingly there seems to be an acceptance of murdering an innocent child in the womb to "save" the life of a mother. And sadly this type of thinking seems to be tolerable within a denomination that affirms the inerrancy and authority of the Bible. When one looks at the example of Jesus, that Christians decry as their standard, would Jesus endorse the termination of pregnancy? Did Jesus take the position

that it was too costly for him to suffer on the cross and he would sacrifice his life for the benefit of others? Although this thought might be difficult for some believers to ponder, it seems that "sacrificing" a mother's life (if there are really and truly cases where the life of the mother is in jeopardy) would align more with the teachings of the Bible. Romans 5:8 captures the character of God on this topic. It states, "But God provides evidence of His love for us that while we were sinners, Christ died on behalf of us" (researcher's translation). However, in a day where individual rights are more important and a baby in the womb is equivalent to a spare cat, this researcher's viewpoint might be scorned.

Biblical Marriages. In the area of living arrangements, almost 25% believed living with a girl/boyfriend was acceptable, and almost 37% believed the Bible permitted a Christian to marry a non-Christian. In contrast, Moses forbade the marrying of foreign wives because their hearts would turn them from Yahweh (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). Ezra rebuked his post exilic people for marrying pagan wives (Ezra 9:3ff). And Paul warned in 2 Corinthians 6:14 about believers not partnering with non-believers. Contextually this might be speaking to the business relationship of believers and non-believers, and if so, this would reinforce how much more God would not want His children to marry a non-believer.

In the area of living together before marriage, Hebrews 13:4 states, "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Nothing could be clearer. God commands against these types of decisions, yet a significant number of FSB believed to the contrary.

In a time when judging others is not acceptable culturally and more types of lifestyles are permitted (and often celebrated), the church can shine brighter by declaring

that God's way in marriage is the most enjoyable. Christians who marry believers, wait until they are married to have sex, and keep the marriage bed between only one another, will be blessed by God. The church must speak to these issues, through clear preaching, loving accountability, and when necessary, in-house confrontation that follows the Matthew 18 guidelines. This should be a type of in-house cleaning is painful and might reduce church membership, but in the end, what is most important is that each local church align more with the heart of Yahweh and His teachings.

Recommendations for Further Research

The current research is a first-wave of effort to investigate the degree to which FSB members affirm the doctrine of inerrancy as expressed in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. This research may serve as a foundational study for future researchers to replicate similar studies in other states where Southern Baptists are located. A possible future study would be to replicate this study within states with large populations of Southern Baptists or to replicate this study nationwide to determine what the entire population within the SBC believes regarding the doctrine of inerrancy.

Another possible study would be to replicate this research among other evangelical denominations. This would aid denomination leaders, church leaders, and pastors to ascertain the degree to which they affirm this important doctrine. A comparison with the SBC might be helpful in determining if there has been theological drift.

Although the focus of this study was primarily aimed at the general membership of FSB, to survey a sample population of FSB pastors, and then compare results would be beneficial to observe similarities and differences. Added to this study would be to

research how often doctrine is preached from the pulpit. That is, how often is the deity of Jesus, miracles of the Bible, resurrection of Jesus, the supernatural events in Genesis, and the moral code of Christian living taught within a 12-month period of time?

A final research study would be to explore in-depth the belief structures of SBC members by asking more open-ended questions. An interview where the participants are able to elaborate with rich description their particular beliefs and the reasons why they have such beliefs would be beneficial.

The weakness of this survey was that it captured the in-time thought process of the FSB members and to a degree some of their reasoning with the open-ended questions, but did not allow, due to financial constraints, the luxury to probe deeper into the thought processes of participants surveyed.

The strength of this survey was that it gave a snap-shot and to a degree a deeper rationale for their belief structures in the area of inerrancy. Adding the expert panel of pastors and academicians to comment on some of the findings allowed the researcher to discover certain aspects of pastoral theology as it related to the doctrine of inerrancy.

APPENDIX A

AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP DATA COLLECTION

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Population	%	Calls
1	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach	5,547,051	32	160
2	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	2,747,272	16	80
3	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford	2,082,421	12	60
4	Jacksonville	1,328,144	7.5	37
5	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota	688,126	4	20
6	Cape Coral-Fort Myers	586,908	3	15
7	Lakeland-Winter Haven	583,403	3	15
8	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville	536,357	3	15
9	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach	495,890	3	15
10	Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent	455,102	3	15
11	Port St. Lucie	406,296	2	10
12	Tallahassee	360,013	2	10
13	Ocala	328,547	2	10
14	Naples-Marco Island	318,537	2	10
15	Gainesville	260,690	1.5	8
16	Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin	178,473	1	5
17	Panama City-Lynn Haven	164,767	1	5
18	Punta Gorda	156,952	1	5
19	Sebastian-Vero Beach	135,167	.6	3
20	Palm Coast	91,622	.4	2
		17,451,738	100	500

America's Research Group provided this data collection guide to show which city regions they would call to ascertain a sample population of Florida Southern Baptists throughout the state. According to the president of ARG, Britt Beemer, there were about 14 phone calls made for every one completed survey. This would mean ARG made about 7,028 phone calls to gather 502 completed surveys.

APPENDIX B

AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP PERMISSION

America's Research Group

810 Travelers Blvd., Unit G1
Summerville, SC 29485
800-723-3253
FAX 843-695-0097

ARG

David A. McGee
16413 Bonneville Drive
Tampa, FL 33624

May 9, 2013

Dear Mr. McGee:

You have permission to use the survey instrument which American's Research Group formulated for the book *Already Comprised* for your dissertation research.

Cordially,

Britt Beemer
Chairman

APPENDIX C

BIBLICAL INERRANCY TEST (BIT SURVEY)

David McGee   TELEPHONE NO:_____
301304
May 28, 2013   TIME BEGAN:_____

Hello, I'm_____of Consumer Behavior Research Institute, a national research firm.
We're talking to people in the state of Florida today about their religious beliefs and
preferences.
This is a privately funded study and your responses will be confidential.

A. Do you attend a Southern Baptist Church?

Yes... No... Don't know...

****IF "NO" OR "DON'T KNOW," THANK AND TERMINATE****

DO YOU FEEL:

1. All the accounts/stories in the Bible are true? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

2. All the books of the Bible are inspired by God? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

3. Other holy books like the Koran are also inspired by God? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

4. The Bible is true and trustworthy in all matters? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

5. IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE" ASK: Why do you believe the

entire Bible is not true?

develop list

6. IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK: Why do you believe the

entire Bible is true?

develop list

7. The Bible contains errors? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

8. Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

9. IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK: Why do you believe that

Jesus was not born of a virgin?

develop list

10. IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK: Why do you believe Jesus

was born of a virgin?

develop list

11. Jesus is God? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

12. The doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Bible? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

13. The only way to God is by placing your faith completely in Jesus Christ? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

14. Jesus was a man and fully God? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

15. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Why do you not believe that Jesus was a man and fully God?

develop list

16. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you believe Jesus was a man and fully God?

develop list

17. Jesus died by crucifixion on a cross? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

18. Jesus' dead body was laid in a tomb? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

19. There were eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after his resurrection? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

20. Jesus arose from the dead after three days in the grave? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

21. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Why do you not believe

that Jesus arose from the dead?

develop list

22. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you believe Jesus

arose from the dead?

develop list

23. Jesus is coming back? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

24. God, through Moses, changed the Nile River into blood? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

25. Jonah was inside of a whale/fish for three days and lived to tell about it? **(READ**

LIST)

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

26. Daniel was thrown into a pit with lions and was not hurt? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

27. David killed a giant named Goliath by using a sling and stone? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

28. Moses parted the Red Sea, and the nation of Israel walked on dry ground? **(READ**

LIST)

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

29. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE" TO Q#, Q#, Q#, Q# OR Q#,**

ASK: Why do you believe that stores/accounts like Jonah and the whale/fish or Daniel in

the lion's den are not true?

develop list

30. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, Q#, Q#, Q# OR Q#, ASK:** Why

do you believe that stores/accounts like Jonah and the whale/fish or Daniel in the lion's

den are true?

develop list

31. The earth is less than 12,000 years old? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

32. Adam and Eve were real historical people created about 12,000 years ago or less? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

33. God created the earth in six literal 24-hour days? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

34. Adam and Eve were real people? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

35. Dinosaurs lived on the earth millions of years ago? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

36. Dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

37. Evolution is the process that God used to create humans? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

38. God used evolution to change one kind of animal to another kind? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

39. Dinosaurs died out before there were people on the planet? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

40. Humans evolved from ape-like creatures? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

41. Because of scientific evidence, I believe that the earth is millions or billions of years

old? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

42. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Why do you believe that

the earth is less than 12,000 years old?

develop list

43. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you not believe

that the earth is less than 12,000 years old?

develop list

44. There was a global flood during the days of Noah? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

45. Noah and his family were the only humans on earth to survive the flood? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

46. Noah's flood was a local flood? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

47. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Why do you believe that the story/account of Noah's flood was a global flood?

develop list

48. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you not believe that the story/account of Noah's flood was a global flood?

develop list

49. The Bible is the final authority in my life when I make decisions? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

50. Homosexual marriage is a biblically acceptable lifestyle? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

51. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Why do you believe that homosexual marriage is not acceptable?

develop list

52. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you believe that homosexual marriage is acceptable?

develop list

53. Abortion is acceptable? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

54. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Is there ever a time when abortion is acceptable?

Yes... No... Don't know...

55. **IF "NO," ASK:** Why do you believe abortion is not acceptable?

develop list

56. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q# OR "YES" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you believe that abortion is acceptable?

develop list

57. Living with your boy/girl friend before marriage is acceptable? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

58. A Christian marrying a non-Christian is acceptable according to the Bible? **(READ**

LIST)

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

59. The husband is the head of the household? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

60. **IF "DISAGREE" OR "TOTALLY DISAGREE," ASK:** Why do you believe that

a husband is not the head of the home?

develop list

61. **IF "AGREE" OR "TOTALLY AGREE" TO Q#, ASK:** Why do you believe that a

husband is the head of the home?

develop list

62. The Bible permits women to be pastors just like men? **(READ LIST)**

Totally agree... Agree... Disagree... Totally disagree...

Just a few demographic questions and we'll be through.

63. I'm going to read you a list of age groups. Please stop me when I get to yours.

(READ LIST)

30 or under... 31-40... 41-50... 51-60... Over 60...

64. How often do you attend your church? **(READ LIST)**

Twice a week or more... Once a week... Twice a month... Once a month...

Mainly on holidays or special events...

65. How often do you read your Bible? **(READ LIST)**

4 times or more per week... 2-3 times per week... Once a week... 2-3 times per month...

Rarely...

66. What is your highest level of education? **(READ LIST)**

Some high school education... High school diploma... Some college education...

Associate or technical degree... Bachelor degree... Master or Doctorate degree...

67. Sex? **(BY OBSERVATION)**

Male... Female...

68. Location?

YOU MUST WRITE IN ZIP CODE

In case my supervisor needs to call and verify this survey, may I have your first name please?

Thank you for your time this evening. Have a great day tomorrow!

I conducted this interview on this date, and the respondent responded to all questions on this questionnaire. I understand that I assume full legal responsibility for this survey completed and falsifying any part constitutes fraud punishable by a fine and jail sentence. I have double-checked the phone number to insure its accuracy.

SIGNED: _____   **TIME ENDED:**_____

DATE: _____   **DONE BY:**_____

VERIFICATION BY:_____   **VOID:** _____   **VALID:**_____

TRANSCRIPTION OF EXPERT PANEL

TRANSCRIPTION – IDLEWILD – NOVEMBER 7, 2013

Question #1
What I noticed was 19.8% of Florida Southern Baptists disagree that Jesus is God.
In your opinion does this affect the Doctrine of Inerrancy and if so, how?

#9:
 I want to answer yes and no and I guess I was a little confused by the question because does this affect the Doctrine of Inerrancy. I didn't know if we were talking historically potential of the people 19.8% that answered the question. Are we talking about potential for Florida Baptist? Or are we talking about logically?
I think a person could legitimately, logically…I'll say this, logically hold to the Doctrine of Inerrancy and think that the Bible teaches Jesus is not God. In other word, they could have a hermeneutical problem. So they may have a very high view of scripture They're just really bad exegesis. So that's possible, but probably not likely in most of that 19.8%.

#8:
The thing I noted was phrasing of the question.
Q14 asked the question was Jesus a man and fully God and it was 7% roughly disagreed with that, so it was a dramatically lower number. I think there may have been some confusion with regard to is Jesus God. No, Jesus is Jesus. God is God. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit. There may have been some confusion regarding the question. So I think the number is lower probably than that 19.8%.

#7:
It was definitely disturbing in that regard because in our world today with all the different religions out there, you think, ok, Southern Baptists, this should be something they should understand and know. Again, I think it does affect the Doctrine of Inerrancy. I'm not sure how it affects the Doctrine of Inerrancy.
It does lead to some other problems. Some of these other questions and cultural questions. Maybe this is the kingpin of all of them. But as #8 said, they do seem to get it better on the other question. It could illustrate some weakness in Southern Baptist as far as our teaching and what we're really teaching doctrine in our churches.

#6
I just have an experiential answer to this and maybe that's not appropriate for this, but I know in talking to people and evangelizing, when somebody comes to Christ, they come with a short package of beliefs. They all believe God exists. They all believe the Bible is true. They all believe Jesus is the savior. Whether 100% of them believe He is the savior and fully God, they're certainly open to that at that moment, at the time of salvation. Now

they may get bad teaching. Somebody may take them out and say now we're not so sure about Jesus, He's partly there, 90% God or a subjugated God. And that's been the case throughout church history, people had problems with that. Generally speaking, inerrancy comes along with the package and experience. Never brought somebody to Christ and they said oh, I'm so relieved I'm saved, but I'm not so sure Jonah should be in the Bible. Never seen that. They're ready to believe and generally do believe the whole thing. Have to be taught otherwise. I would say most of these people have either never addressed it or have been mistaught, taught an untruth somewhere.

#5:
I would agree with the teaching element there. I think there's some missing understanding perhaps of what the Bible is speaking about in regard to inerrancy. Through all of these questions there's such a strong cultural element here that people have captured. There's a lot of ways to go to Heaven and if there's a lot of ways to go to Heaven, then Jesus is not deity. Whatever those things, whatever those cultural norms are coming out, we're seeing immediacy those things are affecting. People are responding and identifying their own theology just as a result of trying to speak cultural relevance. I think in that missing a lot of the inerrancy elements right there. That's my answer for the whole thing.

#4:
I do not think it affects the Doctrine of Inerrancy. I think the Doctrine of Inerrancy, I think it stands alone. Like asking a little boy if a dog has four legs and you called his tail a leg, how many legs would it have and he said five. And they said, no, he would still have four legs. Regardless of what you call a tail, a tail's a tail.
Doesn't matter what anyone says about it, it does not affect the Doctrine of Inerrancy. I did find it interesting within Florida Baptist being surveyed that 37% of people said something other than agree or disagree. You had 63% that said I totally agree. I don't know the difference between totally agree and agree when it comes to is Jesus God. When it comes to that person who said I do not believe that Jesus is God or I have some question about that, I think for that person I would have to say they do not believe in the Doctrine of Inerrancy because the inerrant Word of God is real clear from John 1:1 through various word of God, Jesus is God. And so I found that kind of interesting as a Southern Baptist pastor that people out there in the pew wrestle with that. But I also realize that we may be dealing with more lost church members than we would like to admit.

#3:
I think what this question surfaces is that we need to teach more doctrine in our churches and our pastors on that side.
But there are so many passages of scripture that affirm the deity of Christ. When a Jehovah's Witness comes to my door, I ask them one question. Do you give Jesus the very same honor that you give Jehovah?
I push them and they say no, then I say you disobey scripture. John 5:23 says that all men should honor the son even as they honor the Father. He's deity. And that's a strong statement on it. So my point is that there are numerous scriptures - John 1, in the

beginning was the Word and the Word was God, it's clear. So perhaps not so much that it affects the Doctrine of Inerrancy, they simply don't know doctrine. I think that may be the answer.

#2:
I'd like to concur with what #8 said earlier. I think to be alarmed by the 19.8 is to misread the full survey.
While 19.8 disagree that quote Jesus is God, only 7% which perhaps correlates with church attenders who only attend once a month, holidays - most Florida Baptists affirm that Jesus was fully man and fully God. I think the issue is semantics.
In our parlance, we don't say Jesus is God. Most of the time, we say Jesus is the son of God. So the verbiage in this statement is different than the way people are used to hearing the statement. So I'm not sure that disagreeing with the statement Jesus is God is tantamount to saying we don't believe Jesus is diety and I think that question fourteen - was Jesus a man and fully God - I think clarifies what the genuine perspective is of Florida Baptists.

#4:
From what you've just said then, Jehovah Witness would say the same thing. They would say He is the son of God. So if a person says that's what I've been hearing, then I shudder to think what they are hearing if they cannot themselves come to the Biblical truth that He's co-equal to God, Philippians 2:5-8.

#8:
The question was Jesus was a man and fully God and 93 percent of the people agreed with that statement and these were the same people that 19.8 percent of them disagreed with the statement that Jesus is God. If Jesus was a man and fully God, I think they get it. He's fully God, He's God. I think it's the way the question was phrased.

#2:
The question Jesus is God, a Florida Baptist could say are we saying He's not really man? They would say I disagree with the statement because the inference they might be hearing is that Jesus is fully God but not really man. So I think they might have heard a heretical definition of Jesus as far as how we usually phrase things.
We don't usually say that Jesus is God. We say He is the son of God or that he's fully man or fully God, so I think question 14 clarifies what people really think about Jesus.

#7:
I can't really disagree with that, but on the other hand I think I expected more from the Baptists, c'mon guys we can do better that that. Maybe my expectations were higher. I do see your point.

#1:
You don't really understand something until you can explain it to a five year old. That's when you really understand it. When I read this question, my first inclination was it's hard to determine what people think, how they're reading the question. My first question

was do they think this is saying that Jesus is God the Father. Because in Christendom we don't distinguish well between God and God the Father. Inside Trinitarian talk, we do. So it's sort of a similar line to what #8 was saying, but not exactly the same and I wondered when I read this question I thought it was asking is Jesus the same, is He one with God the Father. Are they the same individual, the same person. So 19 percent was weird at first, then I wondered about how the question was phrased and that's the difficult thing about surveys, knowing how it's going to be received by the person reading.

#6

I think we could say 7 percent of people are in deep trouble. 7 percent are in trouble. It's a good touch point to ask about inerrancy. Creation is a little tougher because you could fully believe the Bible and be an
evolutionist. It does happen. It shouldn't, but it does, people have gone down that path. But it's much tougher if you've read the scripture...I remember Dr ? telling about a fellow who read the book of John and thought Jesus was bragging. And the answer is you've got it right. He is declaring himself to be God. You can't mistake it if you read it correctly with the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Question #2
Question #2. 51.6% of Florida Southern Baptists did not believe the earth is less than 12,000 years ago. Does this affect the doctrine of inerrancy. How, to what degree.....how does that influence your understanding of inerrancy?

#1:

I know some lovely wonderful people who not affirm that the earth is 12,000 years old. But would hold a high view of inerrancy. I disagree with them heartily. But when it comes to the question of inerrancy, I think they're wrong, but can't say they don't believe the Bible because...I think their arguments are wrong 'cause when they present their arguments I do my best to shoot holes in them but ultimately I can't say they're not accepting the text, just that they're in my opinion adding to it. Which may be a question of inerrancy, envisioning things that I don't really see there, big old gaps. I'm not willing to say that because you think the earth is 40,000 years old, you're not an inerranist. But 10 millions years - whatever the number is these days - I don't know.

#2

I don't think there's any correlation between belief in age of earth and Doctrine of Inerrancy. The age of the earth is not an essential tenent of theology anywhere. Apparently, it wasn't considered too important for Baptist faith and message because it's not there either. The text never says how old the earth is. The age of the earth is derived from playing around with biblical numbers which is in itself a great challenge. The text doesn't say how old the earth is. There is no reading of the scripture that is going to indicate to you how old the earth is. This is a specific idea from a specific school of thought in a corner of evangelicalism and so I don't think the issue of age of earth is relevant to Doctrine of Inerrancy.

237

#3:

A couple of things here. I think it's important that we start with scriptures and interpret scriptures and then go to science. I've had some vigorous interaction with a medical doctor who strongly espouses evolution and I told him you're starting in the wrong place. You're buying into evolution and then trying to make scriptures fit with so called science. You need to start with the scriptures and thoroughly interpret them. Then science must fit the scripture. You can't get past chapter one of Genesis without having a conclusion of a young earth. First day, second, third, fourth day, morning and evening, that's 24 hours, excuse me you cannot put long ages in there. Try and put a gap in between Genesis 1:1 & 1:2 - you cannot do that. People have proved that.

Second point, I'm so thankful for Ken Ham. He has really given us valid, strong information for a young earth. We can believe scripture, we can believe science. True science will fit the scriptures in young earth. So I think these people simply haven't investigated the young earth.

#4:

I do not believe it affects the Doctrine of Inerrancy. I do not believe the person who answered that question is looking himself at scripture whether it's infallible or the full word of God. #2 articulated that very well. I do believe you must start with scripture. I do believe a young earth is there in book of Genesis. In fact, I think it's ruinous to go with a gap because you cannot be consistent with scriptures to do that. If there's a gap between Genesis 1 and 2, is there a gap between Romans 5:12 and 5:13?

It can be very ruinous. I also believe that if you go with the old earth, you have people dying before sin. Scripture teaches us that death came as a result of sin. Those who espouse to the old earth will espouse to it with various forms of life that scripture does not teach. But I do think the person taking this survey does not have the experience, knowledge, the blessing, the privilege we've had around this table and I think John Q. Lunchbucket sitting out there has heard a lot of science and I think there are some believers who are scientists who do believe in an old earth. They probably could have me twisting in the wind with theirs but I think as far as the survey, I do not believe 2, 3 or 4 in their mind they were feeling at all this was a slap against the doctrine of infallibility or inerrancy of the word of God. I think they feel that's not a test of fellowship and whether it's 12,000 or a million...we hear advertisements all the time talking about an old earth. I try not to argue from science cause I'm not a scientist - I'm a pastor that studies God's word. I think you get into trouble as a pastor trying to go in to science. I can repeat what scientists say but that's above my pay grade.

#5:

I agree where we are. To me the issue of this as it relates...I wouldn't say it's an inerrant type issue. I think there's some godly guys that are gappers also. I'd read it as Adam to Abraham as 2000 and I'd read it from Abraham another 4000, I'd still see it as some age as a young earth. Here's the issue to me. To me it's a trust issue. Trusting what God says. And to any degree that you want to open an area of mistrust you'll open up an opportunity for mistrust to carry through. So that's my big caution on the way one would read the Bible straight up. How much weight I put on that in regard to young or old earth, I wrestle with that just a little, but I do think to the degree that you put man's imaginations,

man's scientific fields, I think you open the door for a waffling of faith as we see a waffling in the scientific community. So I think there's a trust issue there and I think it comes close to opening a door toward mistrust of the whole Word. So, for that, I'd be real cautious how it's dealt with at the very least.

#6

Gallup Poll in the nineties showed that Americans 10% of them believed absolute atheistic, purely naturalistic evolution resulted in life as we know it. The remaining 90% were split down the middle . 45% believed in theistic evolution and 45% believed that the Biblical record was about right which is remarkably close to what we're seeing here. I am a scientist. I have spent 40 years in science. It is my pay grade. I deal with it every day and people live and die on the basis of those kind of decisions. I can hurt you with the data either way. I've had two professors - one is one of the greatest apologists in this nation who is an old earther. I asked Norman Geisler personally, do you believe in the old earth or young earth and he said in accordance with Gallup Poll, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays he's an old earther - Monday, Wednesdays & Fridays he's a young earther. I'm a young earther. I think the data is very pristine and powerful. The reason why that other 50% exists is because the opposition teaching the religion of atheism which mandates evolution requires these long period of times.

We do not have evidence of long periods of time. We have presumptions of such things. Are new atoms being created in this universe? The answer is no. Which means all atoms in this universe are in fact the same age. That we even have radiometry is a young earth, young creation phenomenon. But that's not our point. These points have been heard a lot in school, have come to this, will read the Bible and say I want to believe that, I think it's true and somebody told me that days could be 1000 years. I don't disbelieve the Bible, but I see a lot of credibility in science. They put men on the moon. They turn the light on in my refrigerator, there must be something to it. But I would say this one last encouragement. J. P. Morland said there's no reason why a pastor can't pick up a stethoscope or a microscope or micrometer and think in science. It does not belong to just scientists. The truth is the truth and we all should know it.

#7:

The question itself - look at it one way, say yes. Look at it another way, say no. The doctrine of inerrancy is the doctrine of inerrancy. There's lot of questions about Genesis, all the way down to the flood. Kind of all over the map as far as the answer. Some Florida Baptists did better than others - they believed in a universal flood for the most part. And so it's kind of a mixed bag of answers. I do believe it is problematic for Florida Baptists and I am a young earth guy, do believe in Genesis. I'm no expert. If you step through the chronology of the Bible, unless you put gaps in there somewhere you can come up with about 6000 years or so. To me it's pretty straightforward if the take the Word of God literally, so I think it's problematic. It is some different percentage depending on what question you go to but then again it is probably, along with women pastor thing, cultural issues out there because in school they're being taught billions of years. It's gonna sink into Florida Baptists at some level and it has.

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#8:

I'm decidedly not a man of science so not even gonna go there. Having said that, William Dembski believes the universe is billions of years old and Paige Patterson he fell within the bounds of the Baptist faith and message so I'm gonna go with Paige and say it has no bearing on inerrancy of scripture.

#9

Let me nuance my yes and no just a little. I think this can be given to all 7 of these. With regard to question, does X affect the Doctrine of Inerrancy, my answer is possible but not necessarily. I could hold to every one of the wrong side of these issues and have a high view of scripture. As said before, this could hermeneutical problem. Might just be ignorant or very poor exegesis. So I think in order to try to establish relationship - not sure we need to - we have to put hermeneutics back into the equation into trying to understand the relationship. Number one is probably one where you say I can see some wiggle room. That one we should've got. I agree with that. Numbers 2,3, & 4, those are clear cut to me. I don't think they are a threat to inerrancy. I don't think any one of those people answering 2, 3 or 4 probably answered on the basis of their reading of the Bible. It is the culture that's influencing them. I will say for the record, I am not a young earth creationist. And I'm not pushed away from young earth creationist because of the science, I'm not a science guy. I have a Ph.D. in old and new testament. I'm convinced because of my reading of Genesis 1 and 2. I give genre a great amount of weight. I look at ancient cosmology language and it makes sense to me when put into mesopotamian language. However talk about trust and mistrust. We probably create a greater danger of violation of inerrancy in minds of people by setting up a strawman. We haven't thought about the relationship between biblical hermeneutics and science. I do think...you can have a theistic science. But in order to have one successfully, serious diligence has to be given to genre and hermeneutical approach.

#4:

There's a difference between old and looking old. That can also be problematic for somebody that says in that language, its got to be talking about old when it's really saying it looks old. God could have created some things that looked different that what we have. I strongly agree with you in that they did not answer this question on their exegesis of the Word of God from Genesis. Age is not mentioned. Science can talk to you about cancer and the animals they've found and the fossils and it was after the fall. They can work it backwards. For a pastor, I get real troubled trying to. It's not right that #6 can do my job and I can't do his. I just think it is not a testament of fellowship here.

#7:

When you use a high view of scripture, do you equate that synonymous with inerrancy?

#9

Yeah, I'm equating it. I understand some people with nuances will say high view of scripture it's got good stuff in it, maybe it's got error. When I use high view of scripture, I'm equating it to inerrancy.

Question #3
(talking about what trying to accomplish with questions - are some answers eroding the view Southern Baptists say they hold?)

#9
They're definitely related but they ought to be separate. For example, there are plenty of positions where a person can hold to an old earth and reject evolution as a process. They're related but not the same question.

#8:
It's not an issue of inerrancy, it's an issue of Biblical illiteracy on people's parts. I think talk to scripture, though. People have a clear understanding of scripture with regard to evolutionary process and saying, no I'm rejecting the creative process as detailed in Genesis and adhering to evolutionary process and I would say without a doubt that begins to undermine clearly the inerrancy of scripture.

#7:
I agree, can't say it any better. It's the culture getting in saying well you can't believe that. Science says this, since your Bible seems to say to those who just read it, something very different. It ends up eroding. So you say, if I can't trust this, what about this other stuff called Gospel. I think it does erode it.

#8:
If I can make one other quick observation, cause I looked at a Lifeway survey done with pastors. And they asked pastors the question I believe God used evolution to create people. 24% of pastors said they agreed or somewhat agreed. You've got pastors teaching that. You sit under the authority of a pastor and he teaches an evolutionary process, people are going to believe that.

#6
What happens with that is that some folks will say I see what the scriptures say 6 days and yet I hear this credible testimony of science, how do I reconcile without throwing inerrancy away. And it becomes kind of a legal loophole to get to that point. I think it's an error to say I believe all the scriptures, maybe not the Jonah stuff. And as soon as we let the Jonah stuff get that level of qualification, then we might say well, the resurrection too. He kind of came back in a spiritual sense, but not really physically bodily. Not invite Thomas to put his hand into the spot where the spear had been. My fear is we give away too much of that. I had that same fear with genre, but although genres are present - people that use genre tend to say the Bible is according to this form and then they write it off with that. Pardon my dissertation on the genre in 1st and 2nd Samuel. My point is that it's used to credit what is there rather than discredit it. I wouldn't want to say that Moses just wrote another creation myth to go along with the Hittites and other pagan nations to fit in with them. I would say Moses somehow wrote something that is absolutely credible so when people read whatever Moses wrote - and Jesus thought Moses wrote it - that is absolutely truth.

#5:

Culture has been affected by secular education or secular education affects culture or whatever way it goes. Genesis 1:26 And God said let us make man in our image according to our likeness. They will rule the face of sea, birds of sky, animals and creatures that crawl on the earth. So God created man in His own image. He created him in the image of God, he created them male and female. Now that's as clear as can be that there's no animal that's an equal to God's creation of man. But there's a great sensitivity in culture to save any minnow or fish over an unborn child and everything else you can think of. It's because of that permeation that is eroding and definitely eroding an inerrancy aspect. So I put all those same things, cultural, secular education, the trust and faith that we must have in order to live, they just seem to be in battle with one another with the culture we're dealing with and people we're trying to reach out there. It's hard to get them to walk by faith and to live in trusting what God says. Bambi will be more important than man or certainly on the same level. I guarantee you to make a statement out here that says animal is no way equal to man is a huge offense to a strata of culture out there. Name all the organizations.
Erosion. Exclamation point.

#4:

I don't know that I add much to the subject.
You're talking about 53 people out of 500 that believe in the evolution process. I do think it makes a tremendous point about evolution of what. Animals? Plants? The species of Adam and Eve? I think anything that diminishes the power of God we need to zero in on or as pastors we need to study that if we weaken that, it can't lead to a good spot questioning from the resurrection to the miracles of Jesus or to Jonah or to anything else. If there's a crack here, it's going to show up somewhere down here, if that's really what they believe. I do believe there's a compartmentalization in the minds of people that take surveys like this and I just believe they've heard so much of the world's philosophy and the world's edification, that when we preach, including this pastor here. I don't know that I stop and try to make a point to make sure we're educating, I think I'm more dealing with the transformation in what God does in changing a person, not making him evolve, but eradicating the old person can make him a new person, I do not think it diminishes the Doctrine of Inerrancy.

#3:

Scripture is not fuzzy on this. You can't reconcile scripture and evolution. What some people need to know is why is there the belief in evolution. Evolution was formed as a belief system, how can we explain the origins of humanity without introducing God into the picture. That's where evolution came from. And Christians need to understand that. It is inconsistent for Christians to believe in evolution and to believe in scriptures. The scriptures are clear on that.

#2:

The way I'm gonna answer the question is I do believe these ideas erode a belief in Doctrine of Inerrancy. However, the reason is not necessarily the way we assume. I think some of the reasons it would erode belief in Doctrine of Inerrancy is because in our

Florida Baptist culture we have tended to look at issue as a dichotomy. We polarize it. You either the believe the Bible and young earth creation is 6 days 24 hour days or you're an evolutionist and altogether reject the Bible. And I think what we've done is frame the discussion so as we communicate with the congregation and student, we've indoctrinated them with you either believe the Bible or reject the Bible and believe in evolution. Because we're drawn a line in the sand, as students move to college and are introduced to evolution and arguments that appear compelling, they're forced into a decision - either go with compelling evidence and reject the Bible altogether or reject what is being taught at school which pertains perhaps to the field I intend to engage in and continue to accept the Bible. So I think this idea does erode belief in Doctrine of Inerrancy but I think the reason is because we've come up with bipolar way of looking at the issue of origins and perhaps until we stop drawing a line in sand, acknowledge that there is a great variety of perspectives on origins. You mentioned about ancient cosmology as providing a fresh understanding of Genesis 1 & 2. Great fresh perspectives to introduce to lay people, fresh ways which moves away from framing up the argument where you have to pick one of two sides. So I think the way we frame the discussion moves people toward accepting one interpretation of Genesis 1 & 2 or choosing evolution and rejecting scripture altogether.

#1:
Perhaps we ought to distinguish between inerrancy and authority. This is almost culturally a matter of overlapping magisterium.
I believe the Bible. When it comes to questions about where the universe came from, I'm not sure what the Bible said. Science seems really good. I'm going with that. I still believe the Bible. But I've replaced the authority of the Bible on this issue with another authority. Culturally I think people have drifted that way. I'll give you another example. Until about ten years ago, the homosexual argument about the Bible was we believe the Bible, that's not what those passages say. Suddenly it's not a question of inerrancy. It's an attack on the passage. We have this cultural mindset that the Bible can be inerrant, but areas that it doesn't speak to specifically or doesn't speak to so clearly that you could never possibly misunderstand it, I can bring in some other authority.

#9
That was my point in the beginning. There are plenty of practicing homosexuals. If you ask them, they'll say they are Christians. If you take the high view of scripture, I think it's God's word and I think it's without error and infallible. And then they'll give you a different interpretation of those Romans passages and others. That's why I say it's an issue of hermeneutics.
I'm not a post-modern subjective response criticism guy. I think hermeneutics is really key. In all of these, they don't necessarily affect inerrancy because you can have a high view of the scriptures, you can think they're inerrant and actually hold that Jesus isn't God logically. I think if you do good hermeneutics, you can't get there. But somebody with bad hermeneutics, in fact I think we do it in all kinds of things.

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#1

After each of these questions, you almost want to ask why do you hold that view. That goes to the heart of is this an inerrancy issue, is this an interpretation of the passage, is this something Aunt Nellie gave you?

#9:

Your authority point is well taken. I would also say that is rejecting inerrancy in a roundabout way. If you say, I like the Bible and I like all kinds of stuff about it, but I'm hearing this science stuff and that sounds really true to me, so I'm gonna go with that, I would imagine what that person is doing is accepting certain parts of Bible and rejecting certain parts. That's saying there's error in there.

#1:

I don't know they ever walking through that process. It just becomes the evidence of science is really heavy and so that's where I'm gonna go. Not by doing this I'm rejecting the Bible.

#9

I do think of all of these, the 2, 3 & 4 questions...I'm going to say we set up the greatest potential for rejection of inerrancy or high view of scripture because we created a dichotomy historically because we are looking at Genesis 1 & 2 to the (cannot understand) wrong hermeneutical emphasis?...They use genre to tear down. That's a huge problem. But we can make this argument about really anything in life philosophically, theologically, scientifically. All kinds of things have great potential for good, great potential for evil. I don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water. Say we take a genre like the first century epistle and apply it full fore to Paul's letter, no problem, why don't we do the same thing with some of these other genres. I would submit that anybody reading Genesis 1 & 2 in Moses' day simply wouldn't read it the way we do. They wouldn't be asking the questions we ask. When I say I give full weight to genre, I think we all do. I recognize where it can lead. I can be a slippery slope. There's got to be a hermeneutical control to keep it from going there.

#5:

I think we need to be careful to not think I'm gonna write this and everybody is going to understand that it doesn't mean what I say. That it's gonna mean something else because it's part of another genre. But there are things like that. When wisdom speaks in Proverbs, I don't think there was a gal named Wisdom physically standing next to Jesus as He spoke the universes into existence. Yes, we see that genre, understand the format, and nobody's thinking let's worship God the Father, the son, the spirit and then this woman Wisdom. At least I hope not.

#2:

I would like to make a distinction between what he's saying and informed criticism. You're referring to higher criticism but what he's talking about is narrative criticism which is an entirely different approach to scripture that is unconnected to higher criticism. So informed criticism...literary criticism or narrative critical approach to the

scripture which is a highly cohesive way rather than trying to dice it up into a thousand pieces.

#5:
From an evolutionary perspective...I am an evolutionist within the species because of ? their time. If you would define your use of the word evolution and divide into two dichotomies and you're opening the ground for evolution within species or from species to species, just from a clarification standpoint, we are big time erosion in my perspective of inerrancy. Those first chapters are so weighty that they affect the view of the whole thing and they all open the door to trust or mistrust. Maybe that was the clarification I was looking for because there is a degree of dichotomy depending on how you use that evolutionary aspect of it there.

#2:
It's not a linear thing, it's not even a spectrum, it's a whole plane of ideas. So long as we're situating it on a spectrum, I think we've miscommunicated the issue. It's on a plane, ideas all over the place and we needn't put them between this pole and this pole. What he's talking about with ancient cosmology has nothing to do with compromising the text with evolution. He's not even considering evolution, not part of the vocabulary, not part of his hermeneutic, he's not trying to compromise the two. But the position neither is necessarily interested in maintaining this 6 -24 hour days. It's an entirely different thing. You can't even compare it with those - it's like apples and oranges.

#5:
Whether linear or plane, you're going to end up with a dichotomy.

#2:
By definition, a plane isn't a dichotomy.

Question #4
Question 5. Maybe 6.
18% of Florida Southern Baptists believe there's a time when abortion is acceptable;
24% believe living w/boyfriend, girlfriend before marriage is acceptable.
How do you see that eroding inerrancy?

#5:
We're gonna start with the assumption that we are not for abortion. Psalm 130 for example, you knitted me together in my mother's womb, I'll praise you because I am remarkably wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. I know this very well.
I think we would believe that life is at conception. I think the attack on the aspect of this issue in relation to inerrancy is a social issue as much as anything else. Maybe over simplification, but I'll put as social element right there. What social norm is. If you're in China, you can only have one child or dealing with an unwanted child or dealing with question of rape or incest, at that point they start becoming social evaluation tools in culture. The battle for that element there is social and there's a grasping for what they

would see as a social norm in responding into abortion, non-abortion. Those are all erosional elements to inerrancy.

#4:
I think when the question is quantified is there ever a time abortion is acceptable, I can see the person taking a survey and I could be one, that would think about the endangering of the mother with the child. And someone has to make a call. And so I could see where 18% would say that is acceptable. I think what has been sold to us in society is that it's very common. I think it's like 1% out there and yet it's being magnified that it's become the norm. I think when we talk about narrative scripture you look at Romans 1:25 that says to exchange the truth of God for a lie and serve the creature more than the creator, then we have taken God's word to serve the creature more than the creator. When we do that we have violated 2 Timothy 3:16 that all scripture given by God is profitable. To tell you what's right, what's not right, how to get right, how to stay right. Doctrine. Correction. Reproof. Instruction in righteous that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. So if we take our values to the word of God and try to examine our values to the word of God we're going backwards. And I think we'll always make it convenient for man as opposed to the glory of God. Therefore, there will be that humanistic element. So I don't want to be real hard on the 18% because I think many of those people probably said it's acceptable and we did not give them choices and they may be thinking what do you do if it's the mother...

#3:
Probably if we knew this 18% they're probably talking about situations that are difficult where the mother is warned that her life is in danger. But there's a classic story and I'm a Gator so I can tell this story. Tim Tebow's mother was told to abort him. Wasn't that the story?
She not only got a healthy boy, we got a great football player.

#6 25% percent believe living with one's boy/girlfriend before marriage is acceptable. There are a boatload of scriptures here. Galatians 5:19 says the deeds of the flesh are evident which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolitry, sorcery...anger...disputes...things like these of which I forewarn you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
So people need to be aware. And you have similar passages in Corinthians and Ephesians. So it's serious.

#4:
People are obvious in reading this that there really is a disconnect. And the disconnect is 90.6% of the people said the Bible is final authority to the decisions I make in my life. But that same 90% did not say living with a boyfriend or girlfriend - only 25% said they thought it was acceptable.
That's a disconnect. The moral fiber of an individual and the mental fiber of what they say. The Bible is inerrant, inspired, infallible, the final authority. But pastor, we love each other, we're getting married. Let's go back to the book. In that point, I would say, yes, they are struggling with the inerrancy of scripture if they know what that is.

#2:
On the abortion thing, again this is a question where it would be nice if you could do further investigation. You've got the situation, you've talked about...not just morning after pill, but there's even daily birth control pills that potentially abort a recently fertilized egg.
I find this disappointing, surprising in light of the cultural term that seems to find abortion incomprehensible.
I like to be optimistic that maybe outside of the circumstances #4 spoke of, the percent might be much lower.
I think what we might have here rather than a lack of belief in doctrine of inerrancy is perhaps biblical illiteracy if there is a significant percentage.

The boyfriend/girlfriend thing. Something that's interesting is that only 5.2% percent actually totally agreed. 19.7 agreed. I'm not sure what the distinction is in the mind. I wonder if people have thought about circumstances. I believe it's inappropriate for a boy and girl to live together before marriage, I'm also aware of the reality that for those who have lower incomes, they sort of get punished by being married by the government as far as getting various resources. Maybe that's something that ran through some people's minds, maybe that's why they agreed, but didn't totally agree. It would be nice to do further investigation. It is a shame that we have this trend that's so out of line with the scriptures.

#1:
Question #5 - the more complex the issue, the less easy it is to tie to inerrancy.
I don't think that question does you any good.
Question #6 I think is easier, but I think when you get in front of committee, you want to be prepared for them to ream you for it, how you're tying these things directly to inerrancy. I think that's a whole other issue you're gonna have to look at. They are good questions and interesting but the thought process behind is gonna rear its head. To me, I say how can you have read the Bible and think that living with your girlfriend or boyfriend is acceptable. But it happens. And they could still make the claim of inerrancy.

#9
The debatable part of your question at the end is have read the Bible.
I agree with what #3 and #4 said as well. I think these are socially, culturally driven. I don't think anybody is sitting going well, I just think Galatians is wrong. I think they're just driven by cultural reasons. And we have good reason to wonder if they're seriously aware the Bible says what it says in questions 5 & 6. If they are aware of that and say I don't care, then they've got bigger problems than inerrancy.

#4:
I think what spoke to me the loudest in this survey as a pastor was deeper conviction of making sure we're preaching the whole counsel of God.
That we're not just telling stories about the Bible or preaching feel good sermons or trying to go after growth. If you're going after growth, there's a lot of topics you don't

touch in the word of God because you have people living together sitting in the congregation. They shouldn't be feeling comfortable about living together, but they not only live together, they make application to join your church. When we sit down with them, you cannot believe the reaction we get. It's not like we're embarrassed ourselves, it's like are you kidding me? That's our sin, but you're gonna say everybody else is sinless here. We just have this sin.

They're bibilically ignorant...if they've read the Bible and they're ignorant of that. Sometimes even in the church, and this survey was taken in the church, not in the streets, these are people in Florida Baptist Churches, we've got to ask ourselves what are we preaching in relationship to holiness. What are we teaching people in relationship to God's standard. Are we so afraid of legalism that we give them no boundaries of that because therefore, they do the disconnect in their mind as far as what they believe here and act here.

They go I believe the Bible, these are folks that might want to fill a questionnaire about quiet times and those things as well. I think there's a disconnect between their moral behavior and intellectual belief.

I walked away thinking I thought we were better than this, but maybe we're not because I have seen some churches that are blowing up and growing and they don't think anything about it because their pastor's not really saying anything about it. They're saying come and join us. We'll take you as you are, acceptance and approval and we have those lines that we use.

I walked away convicted. I need to say that on record as a pastor that we need in the last days to make sure we're clear on the word of God. You can be conservative and not be mean. You don't have to be mean spirited about it, but you're doing that for their protection and for their good.

#8:

Anwer to #5 is no. Up through '91 we had an exception in Southern Baptist resolutions regarding abortion for health of a woman.

Number 6 I found very disturbing and I would say if a person is confronted with scripture and they say it's ok for me to live...they can say they're rejecting scripture, but what they're doing is undermining the authority and inerrancy of scripture. There is no other way to slice it. And there are many people in the church that do that. There are people in my congregation every week and no one would accuse our church of blowing up exactly. I don't think for a second that you compromise the Word. I don't compromise the Word that challenged our folks on these specific subjects and yet still I know that people are cohabitating. My wife counseled at a crisis pregnancy center in north Tampa and told me routinely women come in that are pregnant out of wedlock living with the baby daddy and laying claim to Christianity. And so it is culturally prevalent.

#7:

I think number 5, there's some things you could look at say - certainly, the pro life issue is a huge issue today - but I don't know. That number 6 disturbs you a little more as far as people. You do have 75% of these folks read the Bible at least once a week, so they say they're reading the Bible anyway and 50% attend church once a week. So it's disturbing. I'm not sure if affects inerrancy per se, but what everybody else has said.

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#6

I might add to the disconnect. If there's a process that's going on, question 6, 25% I think are reading and they get to that section and they put their blinders on and they say but he's so cute and wonderful, I just have to and they go with their heart above scripture. If it is inerrant, it is authoritative. And they don't practice that. Any time any of us sins, we are not practicing that.

The world has come up with magnificent excuses. And I'm gonna give you one for abortion. I am staunchly opposed to abortion. I have never been raped. I have never been impregnated by some murderer's baby. I don't know what that feels like. But I would like to say that even if I were in that situation, I would respect man made in image of God and that baby is made in the image of God. I don't ever want to be the type of person that would take the life of the image of God period because that's the truth. I can craft a situation. This what they do in law school. They don't teach lawyers how to keep the law. They teach them how to get around the law most of the time.

I think if I was living in Africa as a single mother of 20 children who would be orphaned without me and was pregnant with a child that had zero chance of surviving and a greater than 50% chance of killing me in the process, I might consider out of respect for the image of God, for those 20 children that I was responsible for, I would give a second thought to taking the life of a child that could not survive, if I was completely convinced. But that reflects an extremely high level of respect for the image of God and human beings.

The overwhelming vast majority of people who make the decision about abortion make them entirely on one subject and it's morality. She's only sixteen, this will ruin her life, she was gonna be a model, people will talk and so they use the immorality. Without immorality, there is no need for abortion. I've never encountered a couple that said we've got eight kids and nine is gonna be a hardship. We've got 4 boys and 4 girls, they match so we're getting an abortion. It is always attached to immorality and very extremes - I was raped by an axe murderer and that type of situation. I would teach and encourage and try to get a young gal to not punish for the sin of the axe murderer.

The other side is the ignorance of that, which takes us to question 7. People who say the Bible teaches a woman can be a pastor like a man. I don't know what they've read, but I think they're brought the culture in and said this.

With all of them, we introduce our specific exception. The terrorists break into your house and they shoot your wife and one of your children and they ask if you have any other children. I'm lying through my teeth to that guy. Is it a sin to lie? Yes. It's a bigger sin to give up my children to the monster. Hard questions. Not the daily question. In general I'm opposed to lying. Worked for Rahab. Tamar...we don't have Tamar Bible College.

People who follow their immorality often will cite that example - what about the life of the mother. What about the situation where there has been rape or incest. I don't think that's commonly the case. But any little exception and they're gonna call it. I know a guy who still wants to be deacon because he reads it that you have to be the husband of one wife and that means one at a time. So he's on his fourth and he thinks it's still ok. He's brought his emotions and heart and precepts and wiped out the inerrancy of the scriptures with them.

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#2:

It's so alarming one out of four with the boyfriend/girlfriend. I wonder if perhaps some of the reason for this thinking is you interview a boomer and their daughter is living with someone and they're just longing to live at peace with what their daughter has chosen to do. I wonder if a desire to emotionally work through the choice of a child might influence that person as well. It doesn't make it any better. It's so wrong.

#4:

What one generation does in moderation the other generation doesn't accept. And I do think there's a softening It's shocking to me how many parents know their children are living and it does not break fellowship nor is there any admonition going on. Its kinda like my mom and dad know that. They're ok with us. You're going, really? You know their mom and dad and you believe them to be upstanding believers in Christ who would say I believe the Bible is application and authority for my life.

#8:

My daughter moved in with her boyfriend when she was 18 years old right after she graduated from high school. I expressed to her very clearly, she was totally lacking in my blessing on that and it created a rift between her and I for some period of time. But I think if she like many others, grew up in the church, made a profession of faith young, went through student ministry, all of those things, we homeschooled her with Christian school curriculum, I think she looked at that like many people do and said, I know it's a sin, but God will forgive me for my sin. We had preached so clearly the eternal security of the believer and that God forgives sin. God forgives the greatest of sin. Her view of it, and I think, I've not quizzed her about it. I think her view was I know it's a sin, but God will forgive me for it. So that may be a lot of what we're seeing.

#6

It's the puritan fallacy. It's God way, so just tough it out. It's awful, but do it because it's what the Bible says. The reality is, as you understand, is that it is where you get all the joy with this, that relationships don't work. Biblical sexuality is absolutely the winner in every contest whether it's
Godless sociologists or Liberty Bible Baptists doing the survey. But you're right, some people have said, that was then, they didn't have contraception, they didn't have psychological counseling, they didn't have meds you could take if you got depressed afterwards. We've fixed all that stuff now through science and technology. Technology doesn't always bring morality. Greater weapons tend to be used to destroy people more, not necessarily to protect them more.

#8:

She was not confused about the morals of it. She knew it was sinful.
For the Paul Harvey "rest of the story", she married the guy and has given me three grandchildren to date so they're both in church and pursing the Lord. And she would tell you now that was a stupid thing she did.

Question #4
Anybody want to comment on question 7?

#3:
They'll have a problem with 1 Timothy 3. A pastor has to be the husband of one wife. So how does a woman become the husband of one wife?
That's a problem.
I think one of the reasons is men as a whole have become more passive and women have become more aggressive. I can say that as a whole.
I was teaching seminary in Los Angeles. I was giving my view of place of a woman and place of a man. A woman arranged to meet with me after. She got her husband, she got the dean of the seminary. They attacked me and I simply espoused the biblical position. She was aggressive and ganged up on me. Shame on the men, they've backed off.

#6:
If there were men waiting in line for these positions, it may never have come up. I would like to say in my experience, which should never be put above the word of God, we have chaplains at the hospital and I've had a woman pastor serve me, minister to me in a deep need with patients that did a wonderful job and I think she was intending to honor God with that and I was blessed in it. It's certainly not the ideal or biblical. I just studied this with _____ I'm in a missionary group with because we're seeing more Assembly of God folks and that particular denomination is very much in favor of women pastors. We just went through this and their reasoning is interesting. They go through a couple things in scripture that are old and have been thoroughly worked over by a great book called "Restoring Biblical Manhood/Womanhood". Fabulous book, nails the situation. But I'm fascinated that half of people would say, sure, that's ok, what's wrong with having a woman pastor. We would say there's nothing wrong with that, they want to serve God, let's go do that. But in same sense, my picture of this is in Old Testament. What's wrong with having a non-Levite make a sacrifice. Everything. Penalty- death. And it's because the picture is owned by God. And it comes back to this inerrancy and authority. It's not our picture. Even in our lives, our marriages are not ours to keep, it's not my right to get a pretty girl and make her my wife and live the way we want to. That's really a covenant with God. When we get outside of that, we forfeit so much of the blessing.
And I think that's what's happening here. Not that there's not a great gal teacher, I've been taught by some great gals, my personal feeling is if my ministry fails because we couldn't get enough men to take up the positions of leadership in a biblical sense, then the onus falls upon God for not having provided those people. I believe He provides for ministry. He brings the funds, the people, opens the doors because He owns the ministry too. For us to make the excuse there aren't enough guys to go around, let's go get the others, it's like saying we're gonna hire some Buddhists, they make pretty good Christian pastors. They don't believe, but they're effective. Doesn't matter if it works, doesn't matter what the numbers are, I think it ultimately matters what the Book says.

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Question #5

#1:

On an intellectual level, I think the Southern Baptists interviewed hold a high view of inerrancy. On a level of practice...

On the woman issue, I believe what the Bible says but I can make those passages cultural. Now it's not an issue of inerrancy. But it is an issue of inerrancy in a way. And so I think on a practical level, I'm going to give them a much lower number.

I'll go with 9 for intellectual level. On a practical level, I'm thinking more like 6 or 5.

#2:

I think it's a shame that we're not all engaging in the issue of women in ministry.

I'd be optimistic and give it a 9. Why perhaps the discrepancy between understanding the scripture and holding a high view of scripture, maybe biblical illiteracy. We don't maybe have people spending enough time in scripture or perhaps we haven't given them the tools to use effective hermeneutics. Maybe they've been reading the Daily Bread too much. I would think the primary issue isn't their view of the scripture but their ability to handle or understand it or their knowledge of it.

#3:

Theoretically 10 and practically 6.

#4:

I would also give a theoretical and realistic. I would also add to that 98% I believe really do believe, so I would say about 9.78

But I would also say there's some ignorance in what inerrancy actually means by their very lifestyles so I'm probably a 9.8 and a 7.

#5:

I felt that however you live your life practically is what you really believe. So I went straight to question 4, is the Bible true and trustworthy in all matters and I saw 60% and I gave them a 6.

#6

I think they think they're at 9. 90% believe these things, say they believe them, but put into practical situation of the heart or situational ethics, they function at a 5 to 6.

#7:

Their answers to those direct questions at the top of the page, they're 8.5,9.5. Then we got down to the practical, the cultural things where it gets down to a 5 or 6.

#8:

I'd probably put it up at around an 8 or 9. I think there's a lot of lack of education. We've got a lot of folks , you've got 500

folks the survey was done on and I don't know how many of those, there's got to be a certain percentage of those who show up a couple times a year and claim to be Southern

Baptist. And they couldn't possibly, they've not sat in on your teaching on Galatians and they don't know, they're uneducated and they'll say something's ok and they'll engage in a lifestyle and they'll lay claim to a high view of scripture and they have no idea what scripture says. So if they were to be educated and the real question becomes are those people even Christians let alone Southern Baptists...so anyway, I think what I'm gonna say is an 8.

#9
I would give the same reasons for all the same logic there, same explanation. And based on this third point on page four, 85.3% believe the Bible did not contain errors, I'd give it an 8.5

APPENDIX E

EXPERT PANEL CONSENT FORM

Expert Panel: Meeting at Idlewild Baptist Church, Lutz, FL

Consent to use video and audio recordings

Thank you for contributing in this expert panel. Your willingness to assist me is greatly appreciated.

You are participating in an event that will be video recorded. The expert panel will be videoed so that it can be transcribed into a document. After completion of the document, my goal is to look for themes and add individual comments into my dissertation that accurately reflect the views of the expert panel. Upon completion of my dissertation defense Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary will publish my dissertation. Please know that **all participants and their comments will remain anonymous.**

The purpose of this form is a) to notify this expert panel that they will be recorded and b) to obtain your permission to use the video recording as part of the research for the my dissertation.

Participant's consent

I UNDERSTAND that this expert panel will be recorded.

I CONSENT to be recorded.

I ALSO GIVE MY PERMISSION to be recorded and to allow David A. McGee to use my recorded comments into his dissertation.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND THAT I UNDERSTAND this consent form.

Signature of participant   Print name   Date

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FOR EXPERT PANEL

Key: TA = Totally Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, TD=Totally Disagree

	Do you feel:	TA %	A %	D %	TD %	
Q1	*All the Accounts/Stories in Bible are True?*	61.0	31.5	5.2	2.4	
Q2	*All the Books of the Bible are True?*	69.5	28.9	0.8	0.8	
Q3	*Other Holy Books also Inspired?*	9.4	9.2	40.0	41.4	
Q4	*Bible is True and Trustworthy in All Matters?*	62.5	30.1	5.2	2.0	
Q7	*Bible Contains Errors?*	6.4	8.4	34.7	50.6	
Q8	*Jesus was Born of a Virgin?*	74.5	23.5	0.4	1.4	
Q11	*Jesus is God?*	62.9	17.3	11.8	8.0	
Q12	*Doctrine of the Trinity is Taught in the Bible?*	69.1	23.9	3.2	3.8	
Q13	*Only Way to God is through Jesus?*	73.9	24.1	1.4	0.6	
Q14	*Jesus was a Man and Fully God?*	67.9	25.1	4.8	2.0	
Q17	*Jesus Died by Crucifixion on a Cross?*	82.7	15.9	0.4	1.0	
Q18	*Jesus' Dead Body was Laid in a Tomb?*	80.7	18.9	0.0	0.4	
Q19	*There were Eyewitnesses Who Saw Jesus after His Resurrection?*	76.9	19.9	1.4	0.8	
Q20	*Jesus Arose from the Dead after Three Days in the Grave?*	78.3	16.9	2.6	1.8	
Q23	*Jesus is Coming Back?*	80.5	18.9	0.4	0.2	
Q24	*God, through Moses, Changed the Nile River into Blood?*	66.9	25.9	3.8	3.4	
Q25	*Jonah was Inside of a Whale/Fish for Three Days?*	69.9	23.7	4.6	1.8	
Q26	*Daniel was /Thrown into a Pit with Lions and was not Hurt?*	70.3	24.1	3.4	2.2	
Q27	*David Killed a Giant named Goliath?*	71.9	23.7	2.8	1.6	
Q28	*Moses/Red Sea, Israel Walked on Dry Ground?*	67.1	25.7	4.8	2.2	
Q31	*the Earth is Less Than 12,000 Years Old?*	29.1	19.1	33.9	17.7	
Q32	*Adam and Eve were Created about 12,000 Years ago or Less?*	39.0	35.9	13.1	12.0	
Q33	*God Created the Earth in Six Literal 24-hour Days?*	61.8	28.9	9.0	0.4	
Q34	*Adam and Eve were Real People?*	73.1	24.5	0.6	1.8	
Q35	*Dinosaurs Lived on the Earth Millions of Years Ago?*	34.3	27.9	25.7	12.2	
Q36	*Dinosaurs Lived with Adam and Eve?*	26.3	18.7	40.8	14.1	
Q37	*Evolution is the Process that God Used to Create Humans?*	13.9	4.0	31.7	50.2	
Q38	*God/Evolution to Change One Kind of Animal to Another Kind?*	16.3	9.0	36.3	38.4	
Q39	*Dinosaurs Died Out Before there were People on the Planet?*	24.1	23.5	32.1	20.3	
Q40	*Humans Evolved from Ape-Like Creatures?*	13.9	1.2	28.5	56.4	
Q41	*Because of Science, the Earth is Millions/Billions of Years Old?*	16.3	25.5	38.2	19.7	
Q44	*There was a global flood During the Days of Noah?*	63.5	28.9	3.6	3.8	
Q45	*Noah and His Family/the Only Humans to Survive the Flood?*	62.5	31.7	3.8	1.6	
Q46	*Noah's flood was a local flood?*	5.0	4.2	40.2	50.4	
Q49	*Bible is the Final Authority in My Life When I Make Decisions?*	54.4	36.3	7.2	2.2	
Q50	*Homosexual Marriage is a Biblically Acceptable Lifestyle?*	4.2	4.0	27.9	63.9	
Q53	*Abortion is Acceptable?*	4.8	4.8	36.7	53.8	
Q57	*Living with Your Boy/Girl Friend before Marriage is Acceptable?*	5.2	19.7	39.2	35.7	
Q58	*Christian Marrying a Non-Christian is Acceptable to the Bible?*	10.8	26.1	41.2	21.9	
Q59	*Husband is the Head of the Household?*	42.0	41.2	11.2	5.0	
Q62	*Bible Permits Women to be Pastors Just Like Men?*	22.7	21.9	37.3	17.7	
Q54	*Is There Ever a Time When Abortion is Acceptable?*	Yes	No	IDK		
		17.9	51.8	20.7		
Q63	*Age Groups*	<30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70
		10.4	22.7	26.5	20.1	20.3
Q64	*Church Attendance*	2xs/Wk	1x/Wk	2xs/Mnth	1x/Mnth	Holidays
		22.9	50.2	17.5	6.6	2.6
Q65	*Bible Reading*	4xs/Wk	2-3xs/Wk	1x/Wk	2-3xs/Mnth	Rarely
		21.9	26.5	27.9	14.3	9.4

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